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PAGES!**

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P R E S E N T S

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO

PS4



**+
90**
GREATEST
PLAYSTATION
GAMES OF
ALL TIME

THE GAMES THE TECH THE FUTURE

**UNLOCK THE
FULL POWER
OF PS4!**

METAL GEAR
SOLID V: THE
PHANTOM PAIN
BATTLEFIELD 4
DRIVECLUB
WATCH DOGS
DESTINY



CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

We play it online and off



FIFA 14

Better than Messi? Oh yes



KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

Incredible - and only on PS4



ASSASSIN'S CREED IV

Massive high seas hands-on

EVERY PS4 LAUNCH GAME TESTED!



THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO

PS4

This. Is. It.

The biggest console launch in gaming history takes place on 29 November, as Sony brings PlayStation 4 to UK shores. Over the past few months journalists and developers alike have consistently proclaimed it the number one next-generation console – and over the next 150-plus pages, we'll demonstrate why. We've a detailed guide to what the new machine can do, exhaustive looks at every upcoming game, interviews with the man tasked with launching the console in the UK as well as its genius creator, and even a look back at the best games of yesteryear, from PS1 to the present day. Welcome to Official PlayStation Magazine's Complete Guide To PS4, and enjoy your beautiful new machine.



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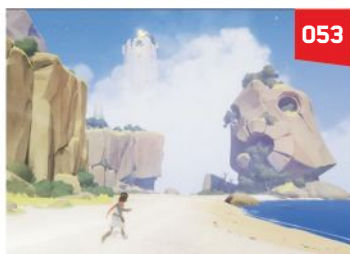
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A look back at six PlayStation classics, and the top 15 games on every format since PS1.

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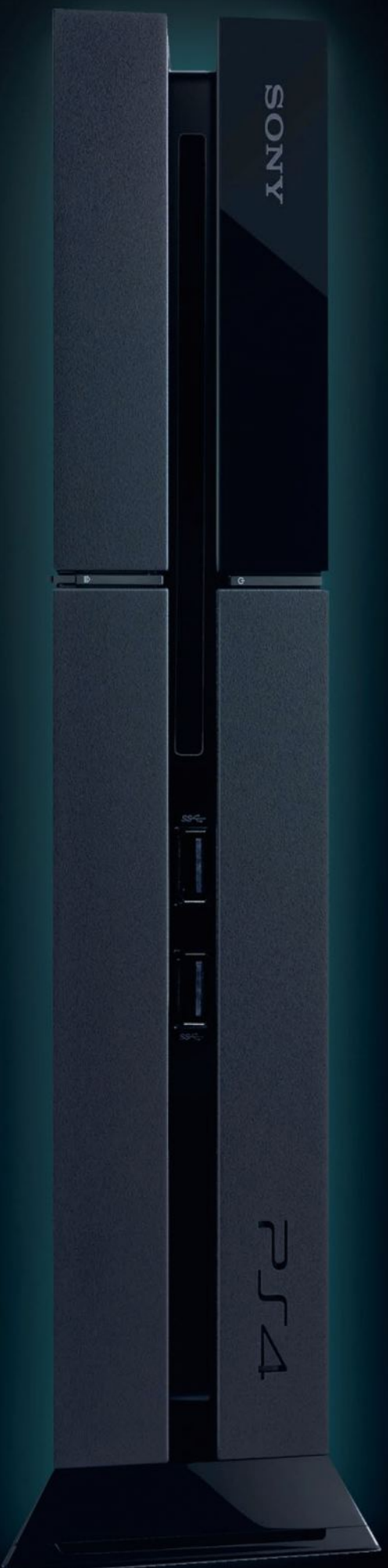
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1995's PlayStation was a box.
 Now, PS4 is a set of services.

Sony UK boss Fergal Gara talks the dawning of a new era, p.96.



THE ULTIMATE PS4 GUIDE

A NEW ERA GETS UNDERWAY ON 29
NOVEMBER AS SONY'S LOVELY NEW
CONSOLE HITS UK SHORES. WHAT'S
IN THE BOX? AND WHAT GAMES ARE
COMING ON DAY ONE? FIND OUT IN
OUR COMPREHENSIVE LOWDOWN...

LITTLE BLACK BOX

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE INS, OUTS AND SLEEK LINES OF THE MOST POWERFUL GAMES CONSOLE EVER MADE

We had to wait four months after the console was announced in February, but it was worth it. Sony unveiled PS4 in June to a warm reception... once people had taken a minute to process its bold design. With an appearance akin to

two mini PS2s strapped together (in a good way), it's a slick, angular beauty that'll look right at home in any high-spec living room.

It's also smaller than most expected, clocking in at a size more comparable to the PS3 Slim rather than its Cadillac-sized older brother. And that sleek minimalism isn't interrupted by garish sights such as

ports and buttons: everything is hidden away in nooks to preserve those clean lines.

Over the next few pages we'll tell you all you need to know about what the machine is, what it does, what works with it, and what games are coming on day one. Which, by the team you read this, will be very soon. PS4, welcome to the party...



① DISC TRAY

The cause of confusion at first, but it's where you'd expect. More digital downloads are coming, but those Blu-rays are here for now.

② GLOSS FINISH

Matt and gloss combine to provide tactile pleasure like never before... if this was a shampoo advert. Basically, it's pretty.

③ POWER

The bit that switches it on. Always in standby like the PS3 Slim, there's no 'hard' on/off switch like the original PS3 had.

④ EJECT

To get your disc out, press here. Or, if playing The Elder Scrolls, forget this exists for nine months while all other games get sad.

⑤ USB PORTS

A pair of them, no less. There aren't any on the back, but two's enough for pad-charging and gaming-headset needs. Don't be greedy.

HEAD TO HEAD

	PLAYSTATION 4	XBOX ONE	WII U
PRICE	£349	£429	From £149
CPU	8-core x86-64 AMD	8-core custom AMD	Multi-core PowerPC
GRAPHICS	1.84 TFLOPS AMD Radeon	1.23 TFLOPS AMD Radeon	AMD Radeon 4 series
MEMORY	8GB GDDR5	8GB DDR3	2GB DDR3
HARD DRIVE	500GB HDD (removeable)	500GB HDD (non-removeable)	8GB/32GB flash memory
SUBSCRIPTION	PS Plus	Xbox Live	N/A
AV OUTPUT	HDMI out, digital out (optical)	HDMI in and out, digital out (optical)	HDMI out, component out
CONTROLLER	DualShock 4	Xbox One controller	Wii U Gamepad
EXTRA	Headset included	Kinect included	N/A





① REAL THING

"Designed and Engineered by Sony Computer Entertainment in JAPAN." We're not sure why the capitals, but it's good to know.

② OPTICAL OUT

For those times when only the most advanced gaming headset will do. It'd be nice if we didn't have to exit the game to change settings, mind.

③ HDMI OUT

You will play in high definition or you will not play at all. Gone is the component option, so all your gaming will look lovely like flowers.

④ LAN

While there's no pressure to be always online, you'll probably want to be anyway. Plug the internet pipe in here and it's go time.

⑤ AUX

This is where your lovely new PS Eye links up. And possibly some other things, but we can't think of what they might be. Not fingers.

⑥ POWER

You'll notice the more modern figure-of-eight structure as opposed to the old 'kettle' jack. Sleek and no-nonsense - we approve.



OUTSIDE THE BOX: PS4'S 'OTHER' FEATURES



PLAYSTATION NETWORK

Your favourite online marketplace will have many of the same options as before, but also a raft of new benefits. These include background downloading, and being able to play digital titles while they're still in the process of coming down the pipes. Praise the future.



PS PLUS

One change being implemented is that online gaming is now a paid-for service. But it's part of the existing PS Plus offering, which provides incredible value at just £39.99 per year, with free triple-A games coming thick and fast. One subscription also covers your PS4, PS3 and Vita.



SHARE

One of the most publicised early features, this looks set to change online interaction. You can now post gaming highlights at the touch of a button, be it a FIFA screamer or a Deep Down boss triumph, for all the world to see. Plus, the technology enables you to hop into a friend's game to help them out.



THE PLAYROOM

Ever wanted a robot in your living room? No? Well, you've got one now anyway. This set of augmented reality features will come pre-loaded on your console, using the Eye to put droid-types in your lounge to interact with or fight. You can even play a futuristic version of, um, Pong.

PERIPHERAL VISION

INPUTS ABOUND – NEVER HAVE YOU HAD MORE WAYS TO INTERACT WITH YOUR CONSOLE. AND HERE THEY ALL ARE...



THE CONTROLLER

DUALSHOCK 4

It's what we know, made better. Sony's iconic controller design was never likely to be going anywhere; instead, it's been refined and improved. *One included with console. Sold separately, £54**

① D-PAD

Now has a nice glossy backing section, but it's the same four directions that have been kicking around since God was a boy.

② SHARE

Already a legend. This is where you click to show the world your gnarly Skate 4 bail, or spoil the ending of Uncharted 4 so everyone hates you.

③ HOME

Brings up your XMB, turns your machine on and off, and generally feels nice beneath your thumb. It also sits below the all-new speaker.

④ TOUCHPAD

Touching things is so this season – but that's no defence in court. This can be swiped or pressed for different types of input.

⑤ OPTIONS

It's Start and Select all rolled into one. How does it know? This is where you stop your game to invert your controls... you beast.

⑥ BUTTONS

Those celebrated shapes are back. Now slightly less raised than before, making it easier to move your thumb across them.



⑦ TRIGGERS

They curve outwards and have a little extra travel. They're also much more taut, making driving and FPS games more satisfying.

⑧ STICKS

The dead zone is dead. These have been tightened up considerably, so they're more responsive, and are concave for grip.

⑨ LIGHT BAR

Used by the Eye to track the pad's position, this also changes colour to indicate player number or, in certain games, acts as a health meter.

3D GAMING

As we revealed in last month's mag, the third dimension is far from dead in Sony's eyes. That said, glasses-free tech does seem to be when the next great movement will start – although Sony's own HMZ-T2 3D viewer is there for anyone seeking more immersion.



THE MOTION CONTROLLER

PS MOVE

The wand and its sub-controller are the best motion devices in gaming, and with the console's improved camera should get much more software to play with.

Not included with console.

*Sold separately, £35**

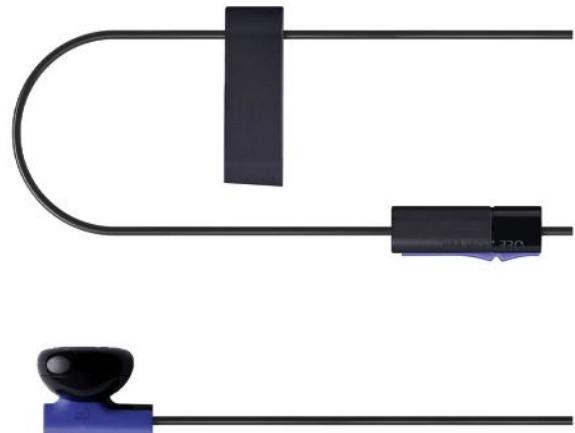


TABLET CONTROL

Second-screen experiences are set to explode when next-gen rolls around. From viewing maps in ACIV to manipulating the city in Watch Dogs – to actually flying in-game drones in The Division – you'll soon wonder how you ever got by with just that massive TV.

TABLET-COMPATIBLE GAMES

Watch Dogs
The Division
The Crew
Assassin's Creed IV
...and more to come



THE HEADPHONES

PS HEADSET

An in-ear headset with in-line microphone, it jacks into the port on the underside of your pad. Hardly top of the range, but it'll mean online communication for all.

One included with console.

Sold separately, £7BC

THE HANDHELD

PS VITA

This is when Vita will really begin to shine.

All games (barring those using motion control) are obligated to include Remote Play functionality, theoretically meaning you can play any PS4 game on the go, if you have an internet connection.

Not included with console.

*Sold separately, from £143.99**



THE CAMERA

PS EYE

It has two cameras, so it's twice as powerful! Okay it might not work quite like that, but this is a step up from the PS3 version, allowing for far more accurate motion-controlled gaming.

Not included with console.

*Sold separately, £44**



DAY ONE FUN

THE COMPLETE LIST OF GAMES AVAILABLE ON 29 NOVEMBER –
PLAYSTATION 4'S UK LAUNCH DATE. WHICH WILL YOU GET?



ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft Montreal
Excitement ■■■■■



BATTLEFIELD 4

Pub EA
Dev DICE
Excitement ■■■■■



CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward
Excitement ■■■■■



DRIVECLUB

Pub Sony
Dev Evolution
Excitement ■■■■■



FIFA 14

Pub EA
Dev EA Canada
Excitement ■■■■■



INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US

Pub Warner Bros
Dev High Voltage
Excitement ■■■■■



JUST DANCE 2014

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft Paris
Excitement ■■■■■



KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

Pub Sony
Dev Guerrilla
Excitement ■■■■■



KNACK

Pub Sony
Dev Sony Japan
Excitement ■■■■■



LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES

Pub Warner Bros
Dev TT Games
Excitement ■■■■■



MADDEN NFL 25

Pub EA
Dev EA Tiburon
Excitement ■■■■■



NBA 2K14

Pub 2K
Dev Visual Concepts
Excitement ■■■■■



NBA LIVE 14

Pub EA
Dev EA Tiburon
Excitement ■■■■■



NEED FOR SPEED: RIVALS

Pub EA
Dev Ghost Games
Excitement ■■■■■



SKYLANDERS SWAP FORCE

Pub Activision
Dev Vicarious Visions
Excitement ■■■■■



AND ON PSN

If your PS4 is being delivered straight to the front door, there's no need to venture out into the cold and wet to pick up games. Most of the titles listed here will be available from the PlayStation Store on day one, as well as these PSN-only offerings...

Blacklight Retribution – Contrast – DC Universe Online – Minecraft – Pinball Arcade – Resogun – Super Motherload – Switch Galaxy Ultra – Tiny Brains – Warframe – Warthunder

NEED TO KNOW

ALL YOUR PS4 QUESTIONS AND QUERIES ANSWERED

How big is the hard drive, and will there be different sizes and models available?

At launch there will be a single model available, with a 500GB hard drive installed as standard.

Can you replace and upgrade the hard drive?

As with PS3, you'll be able to replace the hard drive if you want to upgrade your storage capacity.

Will my Sony Entertainment Network account carry over?

Your existing SEN account will carry over, and you'll likely have the option to display your SEN ID or your real name on your profile.

Will I have to pay a subscription fee to play games online?

A PlayStation Plus subscription will be required to play PS4 games online, with the exception of free-to-play games and MMOs – publishers can choose to waive the requirement for these titles. DC Universe Online, PlanetSide 2, Warframe and Blacklight: Retribution have all confirmed they won't require players to have PlayStation Plus.

What new network features will there be on PS4?

The network will have a more social focus, enabling you to talk to friends using the long-awaited cross-game chat, and to broadcast live video of your gameplay. With PlayGo you can start playing digital games after only downloading part of them, and a companion PlayStation App will let you buy PS4 titles and remotely download them to your console.

What network features can I use without PlayStation Plus?

In addition to free-to-play games and MMOs, you will still be able to access media services such as Netflix, and features like cross-game chat without a subscription. Social features and automatic updates will also be available to all PS4 users without charge.

Will my PlayStation Plus subscription carry over?

All PlayStation Plus subscriptions will cover PS3, PS Vita and PS4 at no additional cost. Subscribers will receive Driveclub: PlayStation Plus Edition for free at launch, followed by one free PS4 game each month – indie titles Don't Starve, Outlast and Secret Ponchos have already been lined up for the service.

Can I play my existing PS3 games on the console?

As PS4 has a completely new system architecture, PS3 games won't be compatible and no downloads will carry over. However, Sony plans to use the cloud-based Gaikai service to stream PS1, PS2 and PS3 games to your shiny new black box.

Can I download or import PS4 games from other regions?

Every PS4 game released on disc will also be available as a day-one digital download, although these weigh in at up to 50GB. PS4 will also be region-free, so discs from anywhere in the world will be compatible.

Can I lend my PS4 games to other people?

As there are no DRM restrictions on disc-based PS4 games, you can lend them to others – who can then play them on their systems at no cost.

Will PS4 have an 'always on' internet connection?

PS4 doesn't require an internet connection and games will still work when it's offline. However, when connected the console will automatically download updates and patches in the background, even when in standby mode.

Can I trade in and buy used PS4 games?

Sony is not imposing any DRM restrictions on disc-based PS4 games, meaning you can still trade in and buy them second-hand from the same outlets as before. It's possible that third-party developers could apply restrictions to online play – similar to this generation's Online Pass scheme – but this is looking unlikely.

Will there still be indie games on PS4?

Sony has made PS4 an open platform for indie developers, enabling them to self-publish their titles via PlayStation Network. Over 20 indie games have been confirmed already, with many more to follow.

How can I use my PS Vita with my PS4?

Remote Play is built into the new console at system level, meaning all PS4 games that don't require additional peripherals can be streamed to PS Vita and played over Wi-Fi. Some games will also utilise the PS Vita as a second screen for companion apps.



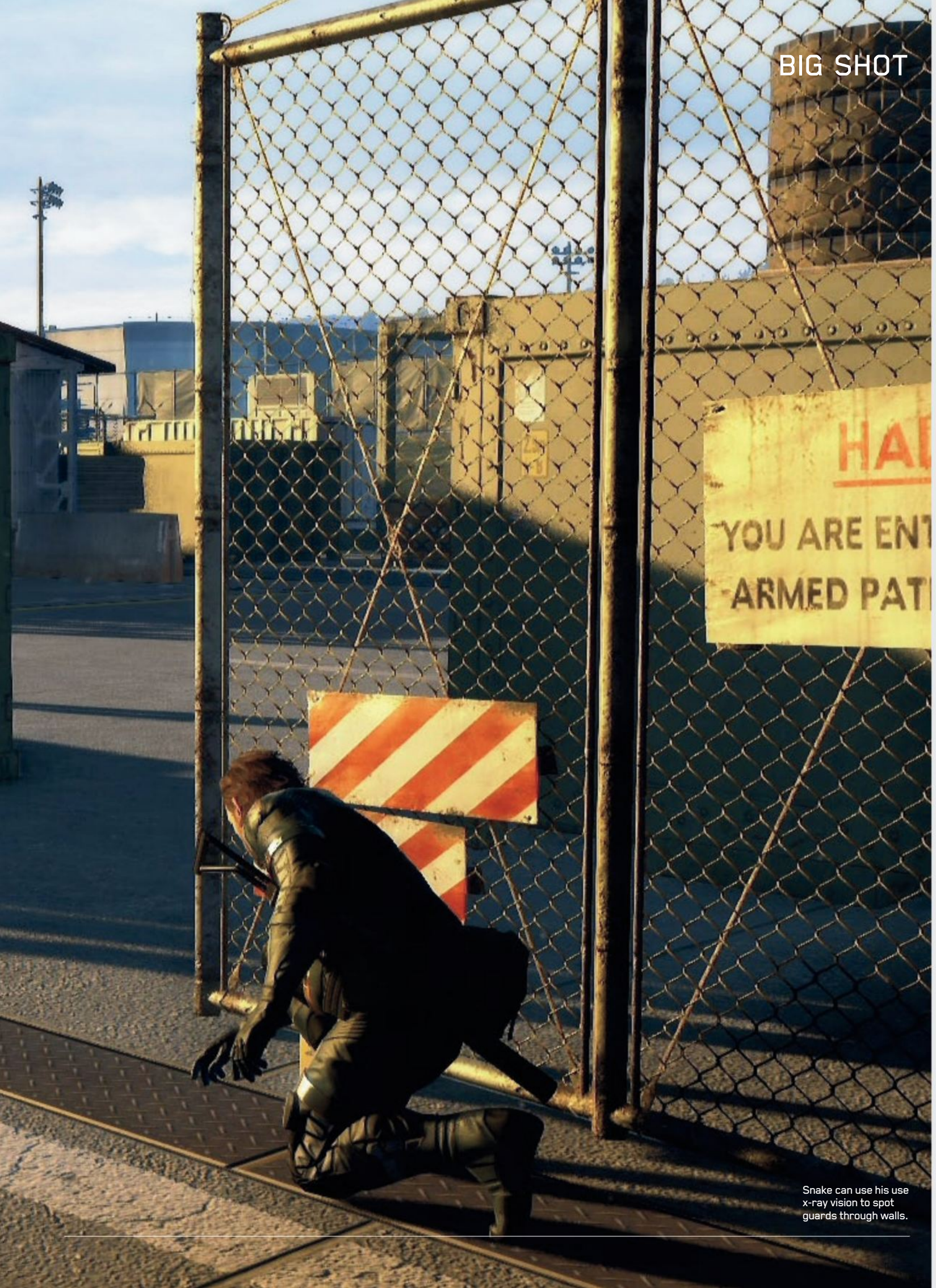
BIG SHOT

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

ETA WINTER 2014 / PUB KONAMI / DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS



Legendary game director Hideo Kojima harnesses the power of PS4 to drag his mulleted, sneaky pensioner into a mesmerisingly detailed open-world. Expanding the boundaries of the traditionally linear series, MGSV is the most ambitious stealth game ever, combining huge environments with deeply cinematic presentation and, er, half naked snipers.



SNAKE can use his use
x-ray vision to spot
guards through walls.



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THE A^{TO} Z OF PS4

SONY'S MOST POWERFUL CONSOLE
EVER IS HERE, AND PROMISES TO
REINVENT GAMING. WONDERING
WHAT IT HAS IN STORE FOR YOU?
OUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE NEW
MACHINE - AND FOUR OF ITS
BIGGEST GAMES - REVEALS ALL

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A

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV BLACK FLAG

Go sail on the seas,
by the dawn's early light

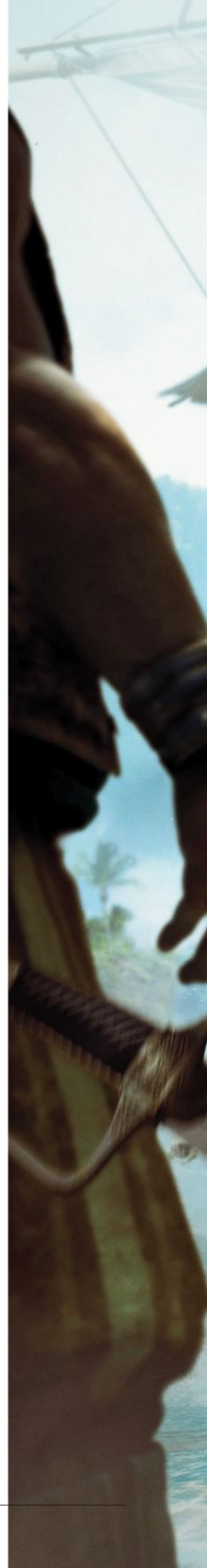
As anyone who's sworn they can definitely leapfrog that bollard after a dozen Jägerbombs will attest, ambition can be a dangerous thing. So it proved for Assassin's Creed III, the game that was supposed to revolutionise the series and elevate open-world adventures to a whole new level. Despite the introduction of naval warfare and a tweaked free-running system, it's fair to say that Ubisoft Montreal's reach extended its grasp, with the final product falling short of lofty expectations.

But Black Flag – harnessing the grunt of PS4 alongside its current-gen release – looks to be going about things the right way. Firstly,

lessons in terms of managing expectations seem to have been learned, with no one talking about the 'bestest thing EVER' this time around. And secondly, on a more positive note, some crucial tweaks are being made to the fundamentals – notably the game's stealth system.

YOU AIN'T SEEN ME

This is a priority for the development team, as game director Ashraf Ismail explains. "Previously players didn't understand all the rules, or the feedback wasn't strong enough," he says. "So we've really simplified how you get detected, how you escape detection, how you sneak up on a guard – all this stuff has been really simplified and made much more intuitive. The





NEED TO KNOW

ETA 29 NOV
PUB UBISOFT
DEV UBISOFT
MONTREAL

1 The franchise's historical tourism drops anchor in 1700s pirate territory.

2 Rowdy new hero Edward Kenway is the grandfather of ACIII dullard Connor.

3 A stealth overhaul and varied locations promise to get things back on track for the series.

THE A TO Z OF PS4

» feedback itself has also been improved, so now we really focus on what the player needs to know.” Not only that, but now you’ll actually be able to tell from a distance how best to approach the game’s various enemies. “The enemy archetypes are much more iconic,” explains Ismail. “For example, our gunners — they’re really deadly. So these are characters that you pretty much want to sneak up on. You don’t want to run towards them, because they’re deadly — and they’re always on high ground so they have an advantage over you. You really have to use

stealth if you want to take them out.” Fine by us.

All of this immediately suggests one thing to the hardcore Creed player: a return to the open-ended assassinations of games past. A staple of series highpoint ACII, and formerly the defining feature of the franchise, these have fallen by the wayside in recent years — but this is all being addressed in Black Flag. “That’s been an intention from the beginning,” Ismail tells us. “This was something that was really strong in the original and second games, and we’ve worked very hard to bring this

concept back. So our mission structure now is much more open — we’re really focused on giving the player a simple objective and having that player execute that objective in their own way. So again, we do things like show you your target. We say, “This is your target. This is who you have to kill — now go and kill him.” You could go guns blazing if you want, you can sneak in, and you can even cause distractions and try to go in with other means. So, yes, we are working to have much more open-ended mission structure.” News that’ll have plenty of hearts

Below Here’s hoping our new hero has the personality to back up his winning ‘dramatic ocean spray’ pose.



Top Not content with mere dual-wielding, Ed Kenway boasts four pistols.

Bottom More NPCs = more options for blending in. Or killing, depending on your morals.



“BEST PUT
THOSE DREAMS
OF PLUNGING A
LASER-POWERED
HIDDEN BLADE
INTO A MARTIAN
ON HOLD.”

soaring like a glorious post-synchronisation swandive.

WEIGH ANCHOR

Of course, open-world ambitions are always going to be helped by more powerful hardware, and the team in Montreal is embracing this. "The core experience is the same on current-gen and next-gen, but [the latter] visually speaking, has more horsepower, so we can really push a lot more effects, a lot more polygons. Additionally, we're taking advantage of the new peripherals and social features [PS4] is bringing to the table," Ismail reveals.

Not only is the team doing that, they're also creating a more beautiful Assassin's sandbox than you've ever seen. "We're building a big open world with really big draw distances, tons of NPCs on-screen. Environments are super detailed – obviously the [PS4] horsepower allows us to push further on this. Everything from fog in the ocean to the sun itself, to the sails having really beautiful translucency, to see-through materials: all this kind of stuff we're able to do for next-gen."

But these looks aren't just there to be gawked at like a page-three model with a penchant for piracy – the range of environments is key in presenting a raft of

different gameplay types. Back over to Ismail: "We have Mayan ruins in a certain part of the world, which are really about navigation puzzles, so:



OPM Do you think it's fair to say that *Assassin's Creed III* didn't quite live up to fans' expectations?

ASHRAF ISMAIL It had its faults, for sure, but there were a lot of people who truly loved the game. For *Black Flag* we told ourselves that we're going to focus on the scope, and instead of going for something really huge that we're not able to polish, we'd rather cut a feature or cut a mission if it's not up to quality.

OPM Why the need for both the number and the subtitle?

AI We felt that the fantasy of being a pirate was really strong, and we wanted to make sure people saw this as a pirate game within the Assassin's Creed universe.

OPM Is this a pirate fantasy, or something grounded in reality?

AI We wanted to avoid the fantastical version – or the Disney version – of pirates, so we did a lot of research and brought in some proper historians to help us out [with the game].

"I'm at point A, I need to get to point B; and the fun is: 'How do I get there using Edward's abilities?'" We have the jungles, which are really about stealth. They're very dangerous – there are predators, there are new enemy types that are lethal, so it's really about being stealthy. Then, of course, we have the new underwater locations, and this is completely brand new.

Underwater is really about navigation and exploration."

Quite the range – and one that's further expanded by the game's three major cities. "Havana is kind of an homage to the cities of Assassin's Creed II," Ismail explains. "[It offers] lots of roof-running, lots of connectivity. Nassau is a city that's more broken down; it's more of a shantytown. Then we have Kingston, which is a mixture of wilderness and city navigation. We found that mixing nature with buildings was really fun, really stunning and felt unique, so this city is dedicated to that."

To press pause on all the piracy for a second, one question always rears its head when talking Assassin's: where could the globetrotting series hop to next? "I love people who say they'd love to

see a game in Egypt or China. On a personal level, I would love to push for something like that." And what are the odds on Assassin's Creed: Future Warfare? "We have that freedom, except I'd put a caveat on it: [this series] is about historical tourism, so jumping into the future is a possibility, but that past element is really important – its not something we're going to lose." Hmm, probably best to put those dreams of plunging a laser-powered Hidden Blade into a glowing Martian throat on hold for now, then.

NEW WAVES

For a series that seems to have lost its way, this is all hugely encouraging news. This is a franchise that was founded on the idea of stealth and 'choose your approach' assassination missions, so the return of these elements should be heralded. Additionally, a protagonist with personality and livelier, more varied environments are huge positives. All of this, combined with PlayStation 4's ability to render a convincing open world better than anything we've ever seen before, suggests that Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag really is a leap forward for one of gaming's most iconic series. What shall we do with the drunken sailor? Whatever you want – just don't let him sneak up behind you. ■



BATTLEFIELD 4

No question about it: Battlefield 4 is maximising the graphical chops of Sony's new console. The game uses the latest iteration of the gorgeous Frostbite engine and will feature even more accurate destruction, as well as improved tessellation. PS4's powerful processor allows for an incredible amount of objects on-screen at any one time (as seen in the tech demo at the console's reveal) so expect to be able to blow buildings up into thousands of tiny, hyper-realistic bits. In multiplayer – which is, of course, the headline feature in any Battlefield game – you'll also be able to use the new Commander Mode to view the battlefield from above, giving orders to teammates using a tactical map. For even more on EA's new shooter, check out our developer interview on page 122.



CLOUD

Cloud storage is the future, and PS4 will make ample use of it. For one, all your save files will be stored on the floating servers, meaning you won't lose them if you have to do a system reset or get a new console. Then there's Gaikai, a service that enables you to stream games over the internet, meaning you can play them instantly without waiting for them to download. This will also work for demos, making trying before you buy incredibly quick and convenient. Other cloud-based services include Music Unlimited, which lets you stream new tunes through your console, and Video Unlimited – which is the same, but for films. It'll be data-heavy, but with UK connection speeds getting faster all the time, now might be the time to upgrade that broadband package.

NEED TO KNOW

ETA 29 NOV
PUB SONY
DEV EVOLUTION
STUDIOS

- 1 Evolution's spent six man-months on each vehicle.
- 2 The game is set to be the most socially connected racer ever. You can still play offline, though.
- 3 It's free to anyone who takes out a subscription to PlayStation Plus. Free!

DRIVECLUB

A racing Evolution from the team that brought you MotorStorm

D

Not all driving games are born equal. There are long-running arcade blasts, demanding sims championed by a few and played by almost none, and cartoon rides that shoot rainbows out of their exhausts. There are officially licensed chart favourites, promising much each year then delivering it the year after. And then... (puts on best Clarkson voice) there's Driveclub.

It's a blueprint for high-fidelity racing on PS4. A giddy celebration of

performance vehicles built with lunatic purpose by a team whose resume reads like a who's who of driving game development, with credits on Gran Turismo, Grid, F1 and Project Gotham. Driveclub is, in many ways, a cut above the rest. And with more socially connected features than any racer before it, Evolution Studios' passion project promises to be more than just a treat for the eyes. Silly naming conventions aside, it'll change everything you know about putting virtual pedal to metal.



“DETAILS MATTER:
THE CORRECT BOLTS
IN EVERY FOOTWELL,
THE CORRECT
INDIGENOUS PLANT
LIFE IN EVERY
SINGLE LOCATION.”

But what does its social element boil down to? We're not talking about a persistent open world like the one *Test Drive Unlimited* dared to dream it could pull off, so it can't be equated to an MMO with carbon emissions. Game director Col Rodgers explains all: "It's effectively a social network for racers. It's completely connected. Think of it as a set of tools for players to create the sort of racing game that they want to make."

ONE NEW MOTORFICATION

One of those tools is the ability to form that eponymous clan. Here, like-minded folk can band together based on their car preference, driving style, nationality or favourite Yu-Gi-Oh character, give themselves a silly name, and compete with other clubs from around the world. Yugi Muto Roolz DooD can even design its own signature logo and car liveries,

Above Tear your eyes off those curves and you'll find the best views ever on console.

so whenever other players see your walrus-with-boxing-gloves insignia against a tasteful fuchsia paint job, they know they're about to go toe-to-toe with the very best.

That element of expression through customisation owes a lot to the wider world of online gaming, but it isn't very 'social network'. That part, Rodgers says, lives in the game's front end: "You'll see suggestions for friends, you'll see news feeds, and other things," before you hop in a car. If you're breathing into a paper bag at the thought of all this social contact, you'll be glad to hear it's not mandatory. There are asynchronous offline challenges, and even AI drivers to compete against. As with witnessing a thug making off with an old dear's purse, you don't *have* to get involved... but you probably should do regardless.

"As you're driving around the track," design director Paul

Rustchynsky explains, "social goals will appear. It'll say 'Player X has set an average speed of Y through this sector' then at that point you have to try to beat them." If you do, you'll be showered in in-game currency, and presented with another social goal to beat on your next lap.

SOCIAL CLIMBER

Sure, you're still not winning the race — but you're progressing in the game, earning bragging rights and gaining the budget to move away from the game's initial hot hatches and into supercar territory. The team's planning even more from its social element as the game evolves post-release, but further specifics are locked away in the safe where blueprints for energy-efficient cars and Bernie Ecclestone's F1 scripts are held. What they can tell us is how every vehicle is made: it's not a matter of drawing the shape of

THE A TO Z OF PS4

each car — it's about building up the individual materials from scratch and putting together a car from those components. It's a staggeringly involved process that Rodgers says takes "about six man-months" per car — the pick of which (so far) being the Aston Martin Vanquish and Mercedes SLS. (In our humble opinions.)



OPM Are you aiming for 60 frames per second?

ALEX PERKINS Increased visual fidelity does cost, there's no argument about it. We are aiming for 60. If I had my way, I'd rather have more stuff going on at a prettier level and a lower framerate.

OPM Tell us, how badly can we damage the cars?

AP We've gone to the same level of detail as we have with all of the materials, and everything's layered up sensibly so you can scratch and dent and crush. The carbon fibre fractures and cracks, and the metal will buckle and peel, and reveal the layers of paint and, finally, the metal.

OPM Are you feeling the pressure of creating the blueprint for PS4 racers?

AP The whole point of creative development, certainly from the art side, is: make the most beautiful thing you can in the cleverest way possible. We've not really changed that.

Art director Alex Perkins reveals exactly how those months are spent. It starts, he explains, with getting specifics from the car manufacturers. "They supply us with pretty much the data they use to build the cars physically. We write that out to one to two-millimetre definitions. Then we build an image around it, slowly building it up and keeping the fidelity nice and crisp." Most racing game studios will take real-life data and use it to build virtual cars, but Driveclub goes to beyond-fastidious lengths in the name of authenticity. That means drawing the vertices of every polygon of every car — inside and out — by hand. GT6 might be big on tessellation, which

draws a more complicated mesh of polygons between basic shapes, but for Evolution that doesn't offer the required level of control. Show-offs.

UNCANNY VALLEY

If shaping the cars is all about being slaves to detail, creating each location gives the team a chance to stretch itself creatively. Rather than real-world tracks, Driveclub offers fantasy ones that twist and

Below The devs don't even see the code any more — just a pretty brake pad, a curvy door.



turn around recognisable real-world locations. The team even travelled to a particular location just to photograph an indigenous plant and then put it in the game. And judging by the unfathomable draw distances, it's also a chance to use that MotorStorm expertise to make you feel part of a larger world — and no, we're not talking hashtags and friend requests. Although since you'll be playing Driveclub with a great big Share button between your thumbs, each location's a potential ambassador for the game as it hits YouTube: "Certainly my pet hate is having a lush vehicle and PS2-quality graphics behind it," says Perkins. "I want people to be looking over after people press the Share button, walk past YouTube and say, 'That's real life.'"

Driveclub is able to indulge such detail for two reasons: one, it's the first racer on PS4 and a blueprint for the genre as it moves into the next generation, and two, it's the game Evolution has wanted to make for almost a decade — as far back as anyone we speak to can remember. If you're going to wait that long, be sure you're going to do it right, says Rodgers. "Sometimes these ideas are ahead of their time, and it wasn't

until the stars aligned with the ecosystem of games moving on and the launch of hardware that was powerful enough to support it, that we found ourselves in a position to create Driveclub." PS4, he tells us, "packs a huge amount of graphical grunt. You'll not see vistas like this on this generation again — actually, maybe in Driveclub 2."

STEERING REAL

Like Guerrilla Games, who we interviewed last issue, Evolution's been involved in developing the DualShock 4, too. Rustchynsky says that the new curved shoulder buttons with increased travel were a big priority for the Cheshire studio, along with taller, stiffer analog sticks. Then he throws quite the curveball: "One other thing we've been looking at is the Sixaxis gyro control. Obviously there was Sixaxis on PS3, but this is significantly more accurate. We've been looking at this as a 1:1 steering method... it genuinely does make the driving more involved." Well, they all laughed at Christopher Columbus when he remapped 'accelerate' from  to  at PS3's advent.

One of the trickiest things to nail in physics terms, Rustchynsky



continues, is getting the car to drive comfortably in a straight line one minute, then giving you enough max lock to get round a hairpin the next. “We’ve engineered a number of systems that intelligently predict what a player wants to do at a point in time. It sounds like it’s not something that would work, but it’s so intuitive; so slick. I can be driving down a straight at 200mph, but then I’ve got a harsh 90° turn right at the end. When I put that steering lock in, I can turn in and feel like I’m in full control of the car.”

These details, like the correct bolts in every footwell, and the correct indigenous plant life in every location, matter in Driveclub. They matter because Evolution isn’t just building a driving game – it’s defining the characteristics of the entire genre for a console generation. “What we really want is for people to say, ‘They’ve done that way better than us’ and then adopt [our techniques],” Perkins tells us. “But we won’t tell them exactly how it’s done. They’ll have to work out the hard bits for themselves.”

Above The best way to take in a view like this is during a nigh-on 200mph dogfight.

Don’t let the cynics fool you – this isn’t a knee-jerk, ‘are we still relevant?’ lunge at next-gen. It’s nine years of passion, strained eyes, proprietary software, obsessive tinkering, and recruiting the best. A whirlwind is brewing on PS4’s horizon – and it’s going to become much bigger than a MotorStorm. ■



EYE

New machine inevitably means new PlayStation Eye camera. It’s a small black box, featuring two hi-res 1280x800 cameras, that sits on top of your TV. You can use the Eye to broadcast commentary over game footage you’re recording with the Share button, taunt rivals in multiplayer or control your games with speech recognition. It uses the same technology as PS Move. Cleverly, it also picks up the coloured light bar from the DualShock 4. If you’re sitting on the couch playing split-screen with a friend and you switch sides, the Eye will pick it up and flip the screen around. It hasn’t been confirmed whether you’ll be able to use voice commands with the Eye to control the console’s menus, but that seems a likely feature.



FIFA 14

EA’s star player continues to generate the kind of cash that would make most small countries blush, and each recent instalment has been excellent – but the new Ignite engine transforms virtual footy. Eight new features are positioned on FIFA 14’s sliding scale of significance. On one end sits ‘Pure Shot’, a drastic improvement when it comes to added variation when taking pops at the onion bag. On the other are ‘Curling Lofted Through Balls’ and ‘Variable Dribble Touches’ – changes so negligible they don’t even deserve to be capitalised, but it has to be said create an even more authentic experience. Add in a reworked Career mode and 20 Brazilian teams (as if you didn’t have enough already), and FIFA is set for a sound first PS4 season. See page 102 for more.

G

CALL OF DUTY GHOSTS

The next generation of war packs in
new guns, dogs and... reefs (!?)

Another year, another Call Of Duty. Except this year it's not the usual mechanical, up-the-number reiteration. It's a new story and – most importantly – a new next-gen engine. Infinity Ward is throwing around lots of fancy words such as volumetric lighting and Sub-D rendering, but the basic message is 'looks prettier, does more'. Given that the series' sales have plateaued in recent years, it's a due change that's been well timed. The updates might not be a complete do-over, but this well-thumbed deck is at least being given a good shuffle.

When revealing the game, Activision CEO Eric Hirshberg stated, "We could have played it safe and simply made Modern Warfare 4, which is what a lot of people were expecting us to do. There are [over] 122 million search results for Modern Warfare 4, a sequel that doesn't exist. So that's a lot of interest and anticipation for us to walk away from. But we did. We didn't want to rest on our laurels: we wanted to push this thing

forwards. And we wanted to use the opportunity with the new generation to usher in the next generation of Call Of Duty." It's a feeling backed up by Infinity Ward executive producer Mark Rubin when he talks about Ghosts being "a unique opportunity to reinvent COD".

So what is Ghosts? Talking to us at Infinity Ward HQ in Santa Monica, animation lead Zach Volker describes it as "a new story arc". He goes on to explain: "It's not part of the Modern Warfare universe, it's not in the Black Ops universe: it's in its own world, its own timeline." (And if you're wondering what's happened to Modern Warfare 4, Volker suggests it's simply being rested for the moment.) This new setting sees America crippled by a superpower enemy called The Federation, who've managed to hijack testing of a new US mega-weapon and, in the process, reduce every major city in the country to rubble. (In fairness, it's probably improved Detroit.) Rubin elaborates: "Our military forces are devastated, our government is in disarray. You are actually the underdog and are fighting back against superior

NEED TO KNOW

ETA 29 NOV
PUB ACTIVISION
DEV INFINITY WARD

1 An all-new COD, separate to Black Ops and Modern Warfare, with fresh story and setting.

2 It's the biggest tech upgrade for the series yet, with a next-gen engine ready for PS4.

3 For the first time ever, there's a dog on your side. The army-trained hound sniffs out explosives.





Left While it's clearly COD, the new engine allows a far greater level of detail and atmosphere.

Above A mysterious cataclysmic event has shattered the nation.

THE A TO Z OF PS4

Right This is COD taken to the dark side – but no, you can't unlock a Vader outfit for online play.

» forces.” You play as a tough SOB called Riley, alongside his brother Hesh, throughout the single-player campaign – a first for COD.

FACELESS HEROES

Volker is keen to press home that Riley and Hesh aren't Ghosts when the game gets underway. “This is the environment, the context, that the player and his brother grew up in,” he explains, adding that The Federation's America-blitzing act “happened shortly after they were born”. Their path to becoming Ghosts helps carry the game's narrative: “The Ghost team are the people they really idolise. The story starts where [they] go out and run a contact with the Ghost team, and that's where the game takes off.”

And who or what exactly is this spiritual-sounding squadron mentioned in the game's title? Rubins calls Ghosts “the remnants of all the remaining special forces” – the blackest of black ops that have, apparently through necessity, “adopted every technique that's useful for modern urban guerilla-style fighting.” Volker clarifies: “[The Ghost team is] a very specialised, small force that is going behind enemy lines and doing very important missions. No one knows who they are, where they came from or how they work. We just know they're there and they are doing things for [the country]. The Ghost team is a thing of potential salvation and, really, of hope.”

So, that's the setting. What of the new tech that Hirshberg says will be delivering “fresh characters, an all-new world, a new storyline, new tech and new mechanics”? What we've seen so far looks a lot like... Call Of Duty on a really high-end PC. It doesn't have quite the mind-blowing impact of Battlefield 4's next-gen debut, but it's a huge improvement on the creaky old engine that wheezed its way through the last few instalments.

A free camera demo showing a flight through a jungle reveals incredibly dense foliage, pierced by rays of light picked out in the steamy air. That'll be the new high dynamic range lighting engine adding in volumetric effects, then.



The floor's thick with plants, while the detail's impressively crisp and movement smooth. Another level takes place underwater and fits in an astonishing amount of seaweed, coral and fish that dart away as you swim past (fun fact: the fish have their own AI). While it lacks an 'I can't believe what I'm seeing!' potency, it more than makes up for it with a vibrant and, most importantly, believable level of eye candy. There are no plastic plants here, or flat pictures of seabed. Infinity Ward is hoping you won't look at too closely. Everything's solid and with a realistic mass. Coral and rocks drift past, and you can actually 'see' the water, a faint haziness giving it substance beyond simply 'blue'. It's all rather pretty and soothing. Until the explosions.

UNDER THE SEA

After a lengthy swim that wouldn't have looked out of place with



Above Underwater bits take in sunken cities and Arctic areas.



Above Despite this show of military force, the USA presented in Ghosts is very much a despondent, down-on-its-luck nation.

“YOU GET A DOG IN YOUR SQUAD TO FIGHT FOR AND CARE ABOUT. DEAD IN THE THIRD ACT VIA SOME HEARTBREAKING SACRIFICE, THEN.”

an Attenborough voiceover, the two divers in the demo reach a shipwreck. The unnamed pair are there “to infiltrate a special location and, on their way there, [they] encounter a special frigate that needs to be destroyed”. The wreck is guarded by a frogman who’s quickly eliminated in a brief shootout, then – in typical COD fashion – everything goes to hell as the divers dodge between sunken cargo containers to avoid thunderous sonar blasts, before deploying a torpedo to destroy the target boat. After fighting to avoid falling wreckage and escaping being pinned to the ocean floor, the section ends with the arrival of enemy frogmen and the zipping white lines of their returning fire.

The key word that Infinity Ward continually refers to is ‘immersion’. “With Ghosts, our goal was to make everything around you more lifelike and more immersive, which really

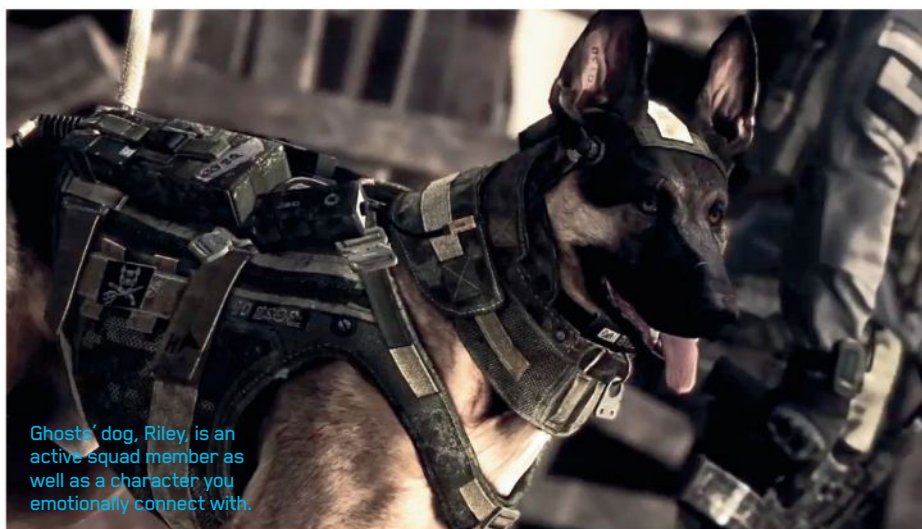
helps pull [you] more into the story,” explains Rubin. It’s something the new engine achieves well with none of the usual lines, joins or other illusion-breakers apparent during our time with the game. There are high-resolution textures, for example, and two things called Sub-D and displacement mapping. The latter forms 3D geometry from flat textures, with the example I saw turning both a flat rock-covered floor and a cliff face into craggy, solid-looking structures. Sub-D, on the other hand, is a rendering technique that’s crossed over from CG filmmaking, and throws more polygons at an object the closer you look at it. Essentially, it banishes straight lines so that things like gun sights become perfectly round.

“Developing a new engine comes out of a necessity,” says Volker – and that necessity is the processing power of next-generation hardware. “What we have now is an open

bandwidth that can accept more things going on, and the current engine can’t push that. We’re now going to have the bandwidth to build many more things, and our engine just can’t handle as much as we’d like to throw at it.”

Interestingly, considering some of the criticism of the old engine, Volker claims, “We’ve never felt that tech itself really has limited us from a gameplay perspective.” Instead, that magic word beginning with I pops up again. “Usually the problem comes when we’ve done a cool gameplay feature and it doesn’t have the level of immersion we originally anticipated,” he explains. “Now we can do things like add more characters on the screen if necessary. We can increase the fidelity of the particles, the lighting quality, or just the number of polygons on-screen. We now have those things at our disposal to aid in the immersion of the scene and really attack what

THE A TO Z OF PS4



Ghosts' dog, Riley, is an active squad member as well as a character you emotionally connect with.

» we call the 'believability' [to] sell that this is really happening to you."

FREE FLOW

Two important things worth mentioning before we move on, though. Firstly, Rubin is keen to point out that, "The new tech does not affect our core design philosophies of low latency controls and staying true to 60fps." Volker, on the other hand, has good news for anyone not able to jump on the PS4 rocket straight away: "No matter what you buy the game on, you're going to get the same gameplay experience. If you do go with the current generation it's not going to be [as] visually impressive, but you can feel safe and satisfied knowing you're getting exactly what we wanted you to get from a gameplay perspective."



OPM What makes this a new engine?
ZACH VOLKER It's a fine line [between] a new engine and augmentations to an engine. What you want to be careful of is making too much of a distinction [about] a new engine. As we develop and add features, at what point does it become a new engine? It's impossible to develop a new engine from the ground up in a two-year cycle. So what we do is say, "Okay, what are the things that are significant? Are those being upgraded in a significant way?"

OPM Is it still built from the original tech or is it built on something new?
ZV The original engine, years ago, was built on the Quake engine. We've done so many new engines and overhauls on top of that I'm not sure any of it still exists. There are certainly remnants here and there of pieces of our last engine, where it's appropriate. We make a really clear point [of] only upgrading the things that are necessary for driving the gameplay... [so] that it handles as efficiently as possible the things we want to show.

helping the writing duties, with the brief of achieving "emotional reality", adding, "Infinity Ward wants these characters to feel like real people." Whether or not it achieves that aim is a debate for another day (specifically 29 November, when the

game emerges on PS4), but there is one character that will have an immediate instant emotional impact, and that's the already-famous dog, Riley. "This is a squad member: you fight for him and he fights for you," Infinity Ward has stated. "He does everything from sniffing out explosives to protecting the team. This is someone you care about." So, dead in the third act via some heartwrenching sacrifice, then.

We jest. Possibly. However, the presence of COD's new animal star has now added 'dog in a mo-cap suit' to the list of things we'd never even considered before. And the studio certainly put it through his paces, with footage of the animal savaging heavily padded stuntman arms and throats. The studio even stuck the little white balls on its face to capture real-life growling. Something else worth noting during these video sequences is that the man apparently playing the animal's handler had his face blurred out. A potentially recognisable face, presumably, that you'll recognise once the game's out.

NET GAINS

If those single-player details haven't whet your appetite sufficiently, then there's good news on the online front too: Call Of Duty's multiplayer side is also undergoing an overhaul this year – its biggest since 2007's Modern Warfare, according to Rubin. That's a lofty claim indeed: COD4, remember, was the iteration that introduced killstreaks and perks – changes that shaped an entire genre.

You won't find such sweeping refinements in Ghosts, but from a hands-on multiplayer test we can still see what Rubin's hinting at. This is more of a silent revolution – an intelligent refinement that dares to challenge some of the franchise's most ingrained rules.



Above All the flashy steam and bright beams come as a result of the new lighting engine.

Right Set-pieces promise to be bigger than ever, as this huge collapsing dam attests.

Take the humble UAV as an example. Since the dawn of time, UAVs have been airborne creatures, requiring specialist equipment and nerves of steel to take down. But why, Ghosts asks, should a killstreak so powerful be so difficult to destroy? Ground-based units known as SATCOMs are their replacement – these are placed on the floor like turrets, and because they're so easily destroyed you've got to think before deploying them, searching out secluded spots or areas that see less footfall, so that you can enjoy their benefits for longer.

What might seem a minor change ends up having a drastic effect on match flow. Instead of online battles being boom-and-bust affairs as teams frantically exchange radars, you find yourself relying more on defensive perks and good old-fashioned caution to gain your bearings, as well as a new feature known as Battle Chatter – where your soldiers bellow enemy positions at each other, increasing the value of taking strategic locations. Impressive.

Other tweaks aim to solve existing problems by working with, rather than against, the community. The

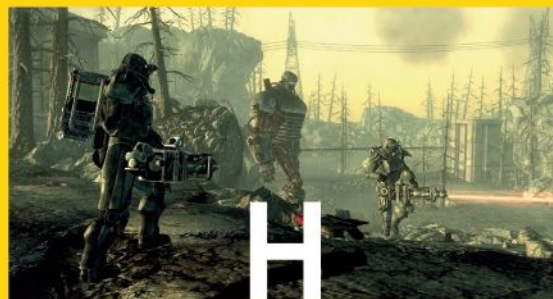


new Marksman class – which bridges the gap between Assault and Sniper – combines the mobility of the former with the latter’s lethality. It’s a potent, if difficult to tame, hybrid class designed to decrease ‘quickscooping’ (running around like a loon using a sniper rifle as if it’s a Super Soaker).

Meanwhile, Create-A-Soldier replaces Create-A-Class, bringing character customisation to COD at last. You can make up to ten of these soldiers – each with their own Prestige level – and there’s plenty of incentive to experiment. Squads mode is a tense one-on-one affair where players are flanked by AI-controlled versions of their fellow soldiers, handing the advantage to well-rounded players.

While Battlefield 4’s colossal 64-man skirmishes are stealing most of the column inches, there’s much to admire in Ghosts’ more restrained approach to next-gen warfare, both online and off. Infinity Ward has taken the dawn of a new era of hardware as an opportunity to retool, refresh and reload Call Of Duty. It could well be enough to see the series start life on PlayStation 4 as it ended it on PS3; as the genre’s unquestionable pace-setter. ■

THE A TO Z OF PS4



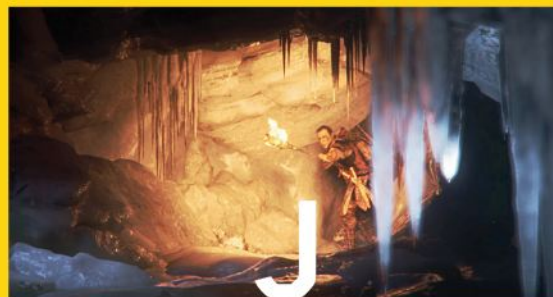
HAVOK

A second dedicated processor in PS4 deals with all the memory-hungry background functions – menus, video recording and so on – freeing the graphics chip up to implement much more impressive physics simulation. In the reveal tech demo we saw a *million* objects colliding in real time, without even a slight dip in framerate. With this running on the GPU rather than the CPU, just try to picture what kind of destruction the Havok engine will be able to deliver. With this power at their disposal, devs will be able to create believable, dynamic levels that respond to how you play. Imagine an FPS where every structure can be blasted away. Remember when you were impressed by Half-Life 2’s physics? That was *nothing*.



INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

Sucker Punch’s threequel is set in a scary totalitarian future, seven years after Cole’s story. New hero Delsin Rowe is just as powerful as his predecessor, but with a different feel – able to shoot fire from his hands and transform into a cloud of smoke. Morality plays a big part, and Rowe faces tough choices that alter the world around him. Curiously, despite the first two games being set in fictional cities, Second Son is based in Seattle – albeit a bleak version taken over by a ruthless, militaristic government. The series has always boasted large, detailed open worlds, but PS4’s power will enable Sucker Punch to be even more ambitious. You can be pretty certain you’ll get to climb the famous Space Needle. For more, turn to page 48.



JAPAN

PlayStation hardware is traditionally developed exclusively in Japan, but PS4 is a collaboration between East and West. The majority of devs are based in Europe and the US, and the new tech has been designed with ease of development in mind. But the console is still a Japanese machine, and Sony’s Tokyo team is still an important part of its creation – as well as third-party publishers and developers. Capcom’s intriguing Deep Down is the showcase for a new PS4-powered engine called Panta Rhei, and features some atmospheric visuals. Square Enix has also revealed a new engine via its Agni’s Philosophy tech demo, which boasts super-realistic beard rendering. Konami has also teased impressively lifelike face tech for future PES.



KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

The vast futuristic city used to demo both game and console at the PS4 reveal conference was a perfect choice. The bright, colourful metropolis was a thrilling change of scenery, but it still felt like Killzone, with chunky, powerful weapons, aggressive AI, cinematic set-pieces, and – naturally – the ever-present orange glow of Helghast helmets. But PS4's tech doesn't just mean the game will look prettier. Guerrilla Games' technical director Michiel Van Der Leeuw says the additional processing power has enabled the team to create much more realistic, natural animation and smarter enemies, all while running at a solid 30 frames per second.



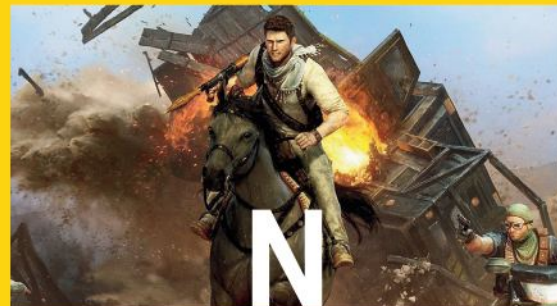
LAUNCH LINEUP

We've already seen an impressive wave of initial software, and each game is a handy showcase for the hardware's new features. Knack, a Ratchet & Clank-style platformer, sees its hero breaking up into hundreds of parts – made possible by PS4's sophisticated physics rendering. Driveclub is designed around the console's online features, with media sharing and multiplayer the main focus. Blizzard's Diablo III, a version of the PC game, is also multiplayer-centric, with drop-in, drop-out co-op for four players. Throw in Call Of Duty: Ghosts, Assassin's Creed IV and Watch Dogs – to name three – and no console has ever promised so much on day one.



MOVE

Pack your shame safely away, because Move will no doubt be an important part of PS4. For starters, Media Molecule's next project makes great use of it: a toolbox that lets you use the motion controller to draw, sculpt, create music, and direct movies. We saw a chunk of virtual clay being carved and shaped in real time by members of the dev team using the Sony wand, and a fancy puppet rock-opera... thing. We doubt you'll be seeing this in a game any time soon, but it showed just how accurate the controller is on PS4, able to detect even the subtlest of movements. And even the most ardent motion-control hater is surely sold on 'puppet rock-opera'.



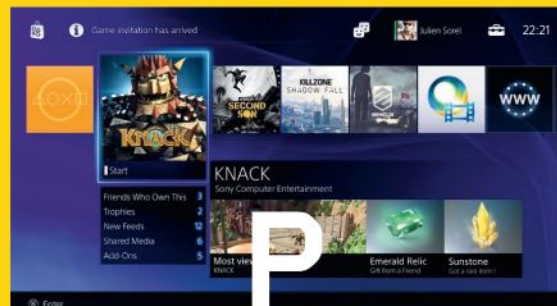
NAUGHTY DOG

As a master of Sony tech, squeezing visuals out of PS3 that most devs could only dream of, it's likely Naughty Dog is already well into next-gen development. The studio's close relationship with Sony means it'll understand the intricacies of the hardware better than anyone else, which will result in beautiful, technically impressive games. So what's its next game? Well, Uncharted is a pretty safe bet. Nothing had been announced as of press time, but PS4 won't be complete without Nathan Drake. Uncharted 3 had a happy ending, but they never last long where the cocky adventurer is involved. Whatever it is, you can be sure it'll look *amazing*.



OPTIONS BUTTON

For the first time since 1997, the DualShock has undergone a radical change. The twin sticks are still there, as are the trademark face buttons, but the shape and feel is all new. The **START** and **SELECT** buttons are no more. Instead, on either side of the touchpad, we have two new buttons: Share (more on that later) and Options. The days of 'press **START**' are over, evidently. Instead, expect to start up your games with a tap or swipe of the touchpad. Options will likely be a multi-purpose button used to bring up in-game menus and features. The Home button, which has survived the redesign, will still be used to access PS4's back end during gameplay.



PLAYSTATION NETWORK

PlayStation Network will be combined with the Gaikai game-streaming service, and will make heavy use of cloud servers. "Social is big for us," asserts SCE president Shuhei Yoshida. "But we understand there are some people who are antisocial! So if you don't want to connect to anyone else, you can do that." Phew – human contact avoided again. Those of you who do want to game alongside other human beings are duty bound to check out PlayStation Plus: you'll need it in order to compete with your mates on games like FIFA 14 and COD: Ghosts. The sweet news? By becoming a PS Plus subscriber, you'll get Driveclub (see page 22) free of charge.



QUANTIC DREAM

David Cage, founder of Heavy Rain developer Quantic Dream, promises the studio is going to use PS4 as a way to reinvent itself. "Innovation is part of our DNA," he says. "We've never duplicated ourselves or other people's projects." What exactly the dev's game on PS4 will be is unknown, but there's speculation that it'll be a sci-fi game based loosely on its 2012 Kara tech demo starring an eerily realistic robot lady, and rumours suggest it may be called Singularity. Whatever Quantic Dream and Cage come up with, it'll be something memorable – and almost certainly involving terrifyingly realistic faces, as teased by the old man tech demo at the PS4 reveal event.



THIEF

A PS4 reboot of the classic PC sneak-'em-up, Thief is being made by Deus Ex: Human Revolution bods Eidos Montreal. It blends shadowy stealth, large, detailed environments, moody noir storytelling and lots of... well, thieving. Fans of Dishonored will feel at home, although that game owes its existence to the original 1998 Thief. Set in a metropolis known as The City, ruled by a corrupt leader, you play as master thief and long-time series protagonist Garrett and embark on a quest to rip off the rich. Your bow is central, used not only for quietly offing guards, but also for extinguishing torches with dry ice arrows and causing distractions. Hit page 128 for more.



REAL NAMES

PS4 lead architect Mark Cerny says the new PSN will be "based on real-world friends", so expect something more akin to Facebook. Mercifully, with fewer photos of your mate's Friday night pint. Boot up your console and connect to the network, and you'll see your buddies' real names and faces, as opposed to BongLord69 and a Helghast pic. "We'll keep the alias and icon for multiplayer matches," says Cerny. "These are great for when anonymity is important, but most of the new social dimension will be interacting with friends using real names and profile pictures." Sounds very much like you'll be able to import your friends lists from other services.



USTREAM

Streaming games has become incredibly popular, with some players even making a living through their videos and commentaries. This means that the Share button, via streaming service Ustream, will enable you to broadcast games live from the console. Previously this kind of thing was limited to PC, but now anyone has the potential to become an internet celeb. If a friend is playing and has streaming set to public, you'll be able to dive in and watch as they're playing, giving advice – or insulting their skills – over voice chat. You'll also be able to take over the controls, with their permission, to help them past a tough boss. Or throw their character into the nearest pit. Oops!



SHARE BUTTON

Another use for Facebook – as demoed at the PS4 reveal – is recording video as you play and posting it to your feed. At any time you can access your last few minutes of gameplay and instantly upload them to the internet. You'll also be able to post screenshots. Sharing is so important to PS4 that Sony has given it its own button on the controller. Developers will be able to disable the Share button if they want to – for example, at key story points or boss battles, to avoid spoilers. As well as Facebook, your videos can be sent directly to friends, or uploaded to YouTube. You'll need a decent internet connection to get the most out of these functions, mind.



VITA

Your handheld will be the perfect companion to PS4. Sony wants all next-gen games to have second-screen features, enabling you play without needing a TV. Developers will be able to add Vita-specific controls to their games for remote play, and you'll also be able to use it to wake your console up from sleep mode and manage downloads. You'll be able to control your PS4 with other devices, too, using what Sony is referring to as PlayStation App. You can install this on your tablet or smartphone, and use it to display in-game maps or purchase PSN content when you're away from your console. As yet there's no confirmation on whether it will enable you to order pizza.

NEED TO KNOW

ETA 2014
PUB UBISOFT
DEV UBISOFT
MONTREAL

1 It's a high-concept sandbox game that mixes hacking, driving and shooting.

2 The actioner has been in development for four years using Ubi's Disrupt engine.

3 It's set in a highly realistic Chicago, built from the team taking thousands of photos.



W

WATCH DOGS

Big Brother meets Enemy Of The State
in PS4's most wanted game

Crafting the intangible. It's the first thing Ubisoft Montreal mentions upon firing up a PS4 dev kit to run us through an exhilarating demo of its hi-tech Chicago-set sandbox. You'd think wielding the almighty power of a next-gen machine would tempt the developer into pushing the button marked 'all the graphics... preferably in explosion form'. Yet the studio emphasises it's what you *can't* immediately see in *Watch Dogs* on PS4 that really sells this tale of *Minority Report* meets *Grand Theft Auto*.

"The experience is magnified," says creative director Jonathan Morin when we ask him about the difference between the PS3 and PS4 versions of Aiden Pearce's vigilante adventure. "There's a lot of assimilation that we do that can't be achieved on current-gen. It's about making sure everything feels coherent in the dynamic of the atmosphere, something that takes a lot of juice. But it makes a huge difference in your impression of how

everything correlates together, like the entire wind system." Ah, those gorgeous gusts.

WIND AND A PRAYER

Remember the first time you saw great big drops of rain douse Snake in *Metal Gear Solid 2*? Witnessing a gentle breeze catch a speckled batch of autumnal leaves in a Windy City suburb, before a current spools them out on the pavement, is up there with the MGS downpour. Watching the weather systems in action, governed by the sort of advanced physics only PS4 could pull off, we're reminded of that bit in *American Beauty* with the floating shopping bag... only without the existential midlife crisis and leering over a starkers cheerleader covered in rose petals.

Watch Dogs is so much more than subtle next-gen graphical trickery, though. This is an open-world experience that combines shooting, surveillance, hacking, driving and Assassin's Creed-inspired parkour into a thrillingly cohesive whole. It's also a game that utilises a variety of sophisticated >>

THE A TO Z OF PS4



Use the Focus, Luk... uh, Aiden. Thanks to recharging slo-mo, Pearce can shoot with unerring accuracy.

» AI systems to forge an expansive environment that potentially feels more connected and organic than even the best of Rockstar's work. The GTA developer transformed Red Dead Redemption's Old West into a coyote-attacking, stagecoach-saving, six shooter-duelling landscape that constantly felt alive thanks to random dynamic events. And Watch Dogs deploys similar strategies to make Pearce's Chicago bristle with an immersive unpredictability.

"It's really about building systems that can coexist to create unique moments," Eric Baillargeon tells us. The AI and gameplay lead programmer has been suitably impressed by Sony's new machine and stresses how the console's developer-friendly interface has helped bring Watch Dogs' connected world to life. "The added resources of PS4 make our job easier in some aspects, like animation and sound," he says. "It's when we thread the driving, shooting, combat and hacking systems together that the

connection that makes the game so unique comes to the fore."

LAY THE HACK DOWN

That's basically a slightly longwinded way of saying, 'Random stuff happens: deal with it.' Watch Dogs' non-scripted moments are actually what make the game feel more truly next-gen than Aiden's badass billowing coat or the game's breadth of thoughtful hacking features – which we'll get to in a moment. During our demo, we're shown Pearce skirting around a dilapidated suburban neighbourhood. Breaking out his phone/hacking device extraordinaire, the obsessive vigilante automatically scans civilians milling around the streets. The game's clean HUD system then whisks up little info reels for your nosey peepers to suck up.

Ooh, Ingrid Manners has crippling gambling debts, does she? What a shame. What's this? Simon Johnson has recently been binned off by his work and can't pay his child



Above Her name's yet to be revealed, but Lisbeth from The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo seems like a definite influence here.



Above Car chases (and crashes) look to handle with real heft.



support? Juicy. Rather than transforming Aiden into a tittle-tattle merchant who starts his own gossip magazine, NPC details prove crucial in creating side missions. Cleverly, the game also randomises each person's bio, meaning no two characters in Watch Dogs are ever exactly alike.

LOAN SHARK TALE

Although the main campaign will be formed from over 100 story objectives, it's the randomly generated quests that develop from observing people that take the focus of our walkthrough. In this case, the paranoid surveillance expert hones in on an agitated man who looks downbeat, like he's just been threatened by a loan shark. Which is probably because he actually is just about to be duffed up by one.

Sure enough, after you track your target in a rundown car park, the poor sod is set upon with a chrome bat by a miffed money-lender. This is where paths will start to fork for



Pearce covers his face when doing something illegal. And when he forgets to shave.

different players. With AI systems that are genuinely reactive, it's impossible to predict how the encounter between hacker and loan shark will play out. In this instance, the perp flees after the assault, triggering a breathless car chase through the heart of Chicago. Of course, some gamers will never see this. Instead, their gangster could call up his buddies. For others, he could simply open fire as soon as he claps eyes on you. If Watch Dogs can pull off these emergent scenarios, it'll be a revelation.

But what of the headline-hogging hacking? The feature that confidently stole the show at last year's E3 is now so indelibly and organically strewn throughout the fabric of the game you almost forget about it at times. The options for manipulating almost any electronics you encounter are vast. Your hacking devices are capable of grand gestures that can literally halt the flow of the entire city — you can stop the iconic Chicago L if you need an impromptu getaway ride, with all the ease of decoding the instructions in a Kinder Surprise. Yet there are far smaller, previously unseen, implications that are equally appealing.

If you thought Watch Dogs was all po-faced trenchcoats and speccy decoding mini-games, think again. Through the most useful in-game dog and bone you've ever seen, the game reveals a pleasingly daft,

playful side. Example? Try the vast number of Wi-Fi hotspots you can hack into throughout the city. While they're useful for gathering mission-pertinent info, you can also break into these babies for entirely voyeuristic purposes.

Want to create your own personal Truman Show? Have at it. In the scenario Ubisoft walks us through, Ade uses a hotspot to infiltrate the home network of a super lonely dude who enjoys collecting action figures (we've all been there, buddy). After going through his mails, you can hack into the webcam on his laptop, whereby you're treated to the sight of him... now, how can we put this delicately? The guy's snuggling up to a life-size sex doll on his sofa, in true Lars And The Real Girl fashion. Okaaaay. "We want to let you see mundane, personal stories," says Morin. If this is what passes for 'mundane', we want *all* the stories.

Big Brother is most definitely watching you, then. And whether it's Pearce spying on a man and his mannequin, or perhaps one PS4 player peeking into another's game, Watch Dogs' surveillance systems combine to form a world that feels pervasively connected. Hold up, one player watching another?

That's what Morin hints at, although he's not delving into specifics at the current time. "It adds a lot of value to the game, because it's real-time. It's an interaction



OPM How have you found working on PS4 so far?

JONATHAN MORIN For me, as I'm the creative director, I could say, 'It's the easiest thing on the planet.' Then all the programmers would be like: 'What?!!' I think it went super well. The transition is very cool — programmers were extremely happy that it's very similar to PC. The strategies that have been used by Sony are very smart from a developer's standpoint and we really appreciate that.

OPM Can you give us an idea of how big Watch Dogs' Chicago is going to be?

JM We want a balance, we don't want to emulate Chicago layout-wise completely and then have a problem with gameplay. We took some liberties. So, the Loop is extremely similar — it's just hyped up a little bit — then we pick the best parts to make certain districts. It's our interpretation of Chicago.

OPM What do you think of GTA V?

JM I love Rockstar's games. To me, GTA is about the nostalgia of the American Dream. I'm excited to play GTA V.

THE A TO Z OF PS4



Scanning people on the streets of Chicago gives you leads on dozens of unscripted side missions.

» between two guys.” That’s not flirty eyes being made at co-op, mind — it’s the suggestion you’ll be able to view your friends’ games as they play.

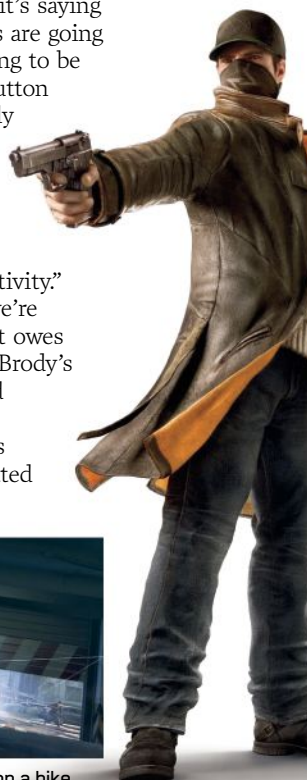
Multiplayer is a big deal here, too (see our second Watch Dogs feature from page 84 onwards for in-depth online details), and Morin is keen to stress that this particular pooch’s competitive modes will share a seamless relationship with single-player. “I’m interested in everyone who buys PS4 having a state of mind where we’re exploring seamless online content,” he says. “Those things are extremely different and it even creates some fear, like ‘Oh my God, some people are going to come and f*ck around with my game.’”

The concept of players sharing experiences — spying on each other’s characters with security cameras, say — seems to tie in

perfectly with the ideology behind PS4’s Share button. The potential of the machine’s social-driven multimedia features certainly aren’t lost on the team, either. “Sony is doing something great,” he enthuses. “It’s making the first step; it’s saying to every developer, ‘Gamers are going to have this ability’. It’s going to be intuitive and all just one button away. What we’ll specifically do with that button? I’m less focused on that at the moment and more concerned about having a complete experience that touches the idea of connectivity.”

Back to the demo, and we’re briefly shown a feature that owes more than a little to Jason Brody’s tiger-punching Rook Island escapades. Like Far Cry 3’s antenna towers, the various districts of Chicago are dotted

Below Next-gen wind loves a good trench coat to blow about.



with structures that open up more of the map to you. With Watch Dogs, you’re dealing with The Central Operating System (CtOS) buildings. “Maybe the tagging was an inspiration,” admits Morin when we ask if Aiden’s stealthy base infiltrations share any similarities with Brody’s pirate encampments. “We wanted to use the cameras to feed back into the environment to give the player the ability to see better than their enemies.”

The objective with CtOS bases is to find and hack into the building’s mainframe room. Once you’ve done this, you’ll then have carte blanche to tinker with any electronic device that falls within the perimeter of that district. How you get to that room is completely up to you. When we watch Ubisoft creep around the base’s facilities, the developer chooses to deploy a combination of cover-based sneakery, slo-mo shooting (accessed by an in-game power called Force) and manipulating alarms to distract guards. While it currently lacks the elegant grace of Far Cry, the stealth mechanics look comfortably assured in a way that gives peace of mind going forward.

We mentioned Pearce’s smartphone earlier, and it really is a glorious little device. Unlike the



Above Aiden can craft items at pawn shops, when he’s not outrunning the fuzz on a bike.

"YOUR MOBILE HAS A LOT MORE GOING FOR IT THAN CALLS FROM A RANDY COUSIN ASKING TO SEE AMERICAN 'TEEETIES'."



Above You can steal items from cars and hock them at the city's Pawned Off shops.

portable brick you were forced to lug about in GTA IV, Watch Dogs' mobile has a hell of a lot more going for it than taking the odd call from a randy cousin demanding to be shown American 'teeettiees'. Hell, this phone even has its own app store, which can be used to download music, create your own playlists or even indulge in some virtual reality mini-games. Honing in on a particular tune that might be playing out of a car's radio and downloading it with the Song Sneak app is a cute inclusion, sure. But firing up a VR game, catchily called NVZN, to fry floating purple aliens is a brilliantly leftfield touch.

STAYING CURRENT

This all sounds amazing, right? Correct. Watch Dogs is shaping up beautifully. Ubisoft Montreal is determined to put PS4's power to use in intelligent, subversive ways, adding a depth to the game that's always bubbling beneath the service. And from our most recent hands-on (see page 92), all of its disparate elements are meshing

together exactly as we'd hoped. If the studio can make free-running handle as comfortably as Assassin's, if firefights are as fun as Sleeping Dogs and if cars ape Far Cry 3's well-balanced driving model, this could well be the open-world game to rule them all. And we include the very best on PlayStation 3 – a sandbox classic known as Grand Theft Auto V – in that. ■

THE A TO Z OF PS4



X86-64

Every PS4 contains an APU. Not of the Nahasapeemapetilon variety, sadly, but a CPU and graphics processor rolled into one. Developed by AMD, which makes parts for high-end gaming PCs, the chip contains an eight-core x86-64 Jaguar and a 1.84 teraflop graphics engine. If you don't speak tech, that basically means it's super fast and powerful – easily equivalent to the best PC hardware. And in a way, it's better. When developing for PC, studios have to cater for all possible hardware configurations, but with set specs on PS4 they can make sure their games make full use of all the available power. The new architecture also means making cross-platform games is easier, so we won't see another Skyrim debacle. Thank Talos.



YAMAUCHI

Kazunori Yamauchi, the creator of Gran Turismo, has described PlayStation 4 as a 'blank canvas', with regards to how easy – and simple – it is to develop for. This is potentially good news for him and his studio, Polyphony Digital, after its last game, Gran Turismo 5, took a laboured five years to develop. GT5 was originally intended to have video-sharing features, but these were dropped because of PS3's lack of memory. So you can expect any future PS4 version of Gran Turismo (sadly, GT6 is only coming to PS3 – at least for now) to incorporate this. Yamauchi has also talked about cross-platform racing, something that may become possible if a Vita version of the next Gran Turismo game is released.



ZZZZZ

Let's be honest, a lot of good PS3 gaming time was wasted on updates. But the days of excitedly sliding a game in, only to deflate when you realise there's a 9GB patch to download, are over. PS4 will be able to self-update, even when in standby mode. That means more time playing and less time staring at slowly climbing progress bars. Another interesting feature is being able to play some games before they're fully patched. Blizzard already does this on PC with the likes of World Of Warcraft and Starcraft II, so the tech exists and works. This means you can dive into your game once the essential files are installed without waiting for the whole update to come through. 'Download in background': you're dead to us.

BIG SHOT

Those evil glowing
space-Nazi eyes have
never looked purdier.

BIG SHOT

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

ETA 29 NOV / PUB SONY / DEV GUERRILLA GAMES

.....

One of the shining lights of PS4's launch lineup, Guerrilla sets a high technical bar to vault right out of the next-gen gate. Sporting the sumptuous, envelope-pushing visuals the series is famed for, this shooter sees uber villains The Helghast battle a race called The Vektan. Sturdy combat is backed up by an impressive multiplayer that runs at 60fps.



.....

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PREVIEWS



44 MGS V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

A PlayStation legend returns – and this time out Snake's in an open world. With a semi-naked sniper. And horses.

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PREVIEW





"STARING OUT OVER
MILES OF DESERT,
THE POSSIBILITIES
ARE DIZZYING."

ETA 2014 / PUB KONAMI
DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

Kojima guns for user-created
missions as Snake opens the sandbox



Hideo Kojima has never been afraid to take a meaty swing at that fabled fourth wall. Be it the pad-swapping malarkey of MGS1 or telling you to switch off your PS2 in Sons Of Liberty, the Metal Gear creator loves to push boundaries. And now, the esoteric director has his sights firmly locked on smashing game taboos.

"Game technology and hardware have always been evolving and becoming great, but we're always fighting against aliens and shooting. I didn't want to be like that," says Kojima of the thinking behind his latest work of love. "I wanted to make a game with a deep theme and change the industry."

While it's too early to say whether The Phantom Pain will realign gaming's tectonic plates, our first behind-closed-doors look at Big Boss' latest was a 2013 highlight. Clips of child soldiers first wielding AKs like grizzled vets and then huddling together in cages is the sort of imagery that's bound to push buttons. But even the dramatic impact the game's dark themes could have is set to be dwarfed by the consequences of Metal Gear getting its GTA on.

It's difficult to put into context just how much of a sweeping change this is for the series. MGS4 had



PREVIEW



Left Big Boss and Ocelot join forces after their bromantic Russian rivalry in *SNAKE EATER*. What a cute couple.

Right Glimpses from the game's extended E3 trailer hint Kojima won't pull any punches when it comes to showing acts of torture.



MGS2 touched on the issue of child soldiers, but never to this degree. A stern image, no doubt.

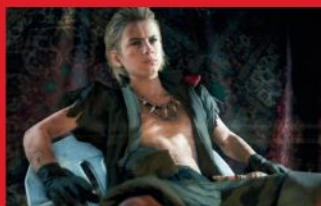


Four fresh MGS faces

Meet a few of *The Phantom Pain's* important (and weird) guys and gals



1 MGS loves to put its characters in gloriously inappropriate clobber. Take Quiet, a seemingly mute sniper who sees fit to wear nowt but a bra and khakis.



2 Say hello to a watery young serpent. This litt'un is called Eli and could well be a 12-year-old Liquid Snake, judging by those cold eyes and blonde mullet.



3 This proud owner of a rather dashing military beret would appear to be an older Kaz Miller. Expect him to seek vengeance for the loss of his leg.



4 Kojima sure is fond of a codger. Like *The End* from MGS3, Code Talker appears to be over a century old, while also possessing paranormal powers.



Above Another nod to MGS3 as a woman suffers electroshock torture. Notice the rips in Quiet's tights (à la Eva in Snake Eater).

"SNAKE SHIFTS HIS WEIGHT BY LEANING TO ONE SIDE OF THE HORSE, AND AVOIDS BEING SPOTTED."



Above We're still not sold on Kiefer Sutherland voicing Snake, but there's no denying the facial modelling is scarily good.



Above Say hello to Ghost Face. The Skeletor-looking chap seems set to be one of the game's main antagonists.

>>

some fairly large 'levels,' but they were exactly that: corridors that provided the *illusion* of freedom. But now, as you watch the legendary soldier stare over countless miles of Afghan desert from atop a mountain ridge, the possibilities are dizzying. Kojima Productions is one of the finest studios in the industry when it comes to eking out incidental detail. Sprawl that level of careful craft out on to the colossal real estate that's evident in the latest trailer and, again, we direct you towards 'dizzying'.

"Distance is a very big factor," claims Kojima. "In the trailer you saw Snake riding a horse, but you can also walk to a mission or take another mode of transport." Watch and you'll notice a lovely touch where your hero repositions his weight to lean against one side of his horse and avoid being spotted – a technique similar to a move in *Shadow Of The Colossus*. It's a clever example of hardwiring the series' stealth into the challenges open-world transport brings about, and continues the gloriously playful controls seen in *Guns Of The Patriots*.

SECOND-SCREEN SON

But what prompted such a radical change of design? Metal Gear has never been afraid to subvert expectations, but Snake slithering into sandbox mode is the most fundamental change for the series

since he went Solid. Surprisingly, Kojima reveals the decision was made so that *The Phantom Pain* could incorporate second-screen functionality.

"All the freedom is up to you and there are no rules [like] the linear games in the past," Kojima states. "You can use smartphones and tablets to interact with the world. That's why we did an open world, because we thought about all these interactions on multiple devices." Snake's visionary, movie-mad auteur also hints at an interest in using cloud services in the future, and it's certainly something he'll have a platform to explore on PS4, thanks to Sony's 2012 acquisition of Gaikai.

There's a more exciting prospect on the horizon than potentially sniffing out the location of cardboard boxes with your iPad, though. Kojima has also confirmed *The Phantom Pain* will enable players to create their own missions. "Using tablets and smartphones you can also enjoy MGS V and create user-generated missions within the world." If you're given ample tools to create bespoke stealth mini-games within this playground, it could be a game-changing addition for the stealth genre. Although *inFamous 2* only had minor success with user-created content, we're confident MGS can pull it off.

HOOK, ONLINE AND SINKER

For fans of the sadly now-defunct Metal Gear Online, there's some chipper news to get Codecs bleeping. Yup, MGS V is bringing back the beloved multiplayer, with Kojima Productions' new LA studio in charge of the mode. It's a sensible move that will allow Kojima's main team to focus on creating a single-player masterpiece. And really, that's what *The Phantom Pain* is shaping up to be. With the more linear hospital sequence acting as a prologue to ease stealth fans into this brave new world, there's an admission that this is a major reinvention for Metal Gear, and looks to redefine stealth. Koj does love to push those boundaries, after all. ■

FACTRICK

1. REST IN PEACE

MGS V is a globe-spanning epic stealth adventure that takes place in 1984, ten years after *Peace Walker*.

2. BASE OFF

The game brings back BB's Mother Base fortress, which can be seen under attack in one of the trailers.

3. GROUND CONTROL

The *Ground Zeroes* chapter takes place nine years before TPP and could yet be released digitally.

"PREPARE TO GET NAGGED BY YOUR BROTHER, REGGIE. SHUT UP, REGGIE."

ETA FEB 2014
PUB SONY / DEV SUCKER PUNCH

INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

And Seattle always looked so idyllic...



Being able to fry foes with lightning hands is so passé. With previous star Cole MacGrath now electrocuting daisies, it's time for new kid Delsin Rowe to shine... then choke everyone using his ability to control billowing black clouds of smoke.

Set around a Seattle complex called the Pacific Science Centre (think Epcot with less giant golf balls and more security guards tooled to the teeth), the action looks hella slick. Thanks to his powers, Delsin can effortlessly teleport around the environment and even through solid structures, like buildings or walls.

Cole's glorified cattle prod has been ditched in favour of a flaming bike chain wrapped around the wrists of your new 'bio-terrorist'. Not only can he deal serious damage to his foes, but scenery is also highly destructible — at one point, Delsin utterly blitzes a couple of security towers. Oh, and sends a T-rex skeleton packing like a prehistoric deck of cards with a thunderous shockwave attack.

Unlike MacGrath, your new graffiti artist isn't limited to a single elemental style — his real ability is stealing others' magic juju. Expect more varied moves next to the series' usual ace platforming. And to get nagged a lot by Delsin's disapproving cop brother, Reggie. Shut up, Reggie. ■



Above Pyrophobic? Terrified of blokes in hats? It's probably fair to say *Infamous: Second Son* isn't the game for you.

We're pretty certain Delsin isn't just going for the 'friendly grandma' cheek-pinch here.

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ETA SPRING 2014 / PUB ACTIVISION / DEV BUNGIE

DESTINY

Bungie cuts its Halo cord



This is the kind of game you could lose weeks at a time to. 'Summer of '14? Yeah, man. To be honest, it's all a bit of a blur. All I know is I came to in late September with a tonne of loot, a badass Titan, and Europe's largest collection of depleted Cheestring packets. It was a crazy time, bruv.'

Destiny isn't designed to be enjoyed over a tight-as-razor-wire six-hour campaign, or protracted over a tacked-on multiplayer mode you're only playing to get the remaining trophies. This is a shooter with genuine vision – a game that looks as if it can actually deliver on that quickly dulling sentiment devs love to talk about, and blur the line between single and multiplayer gaming.

WORLD OF ADVENTURE

FACTRICK

1. FIRST CRACK

A publisher synonymous with Xbox, this is Bungie's first PlayStation game since going multiformat in 2010.

2. SPRINT KINGS

Bungie's mo-cap studio has double doors, enabling actors to get a running start for action sequences.

3. ON THEIR TOES

Most employees at its Seattle HQ work in one open space – many choosing to stand rather than sit.

On the back of this summer's E3, Destiny's high-concept spiel got a lot less nebulous, and anyone hoping for Halo: PS4 Edition was instead met by something better. Specifically, a game world that looks so rich in narrative and visual detail that you'd be happy to just take a stroll in it with your gun holstered, or pick a point in the sky and fly to it in your own vessel. "It's a world you want to be in," explains creative director and Bungie co-founder Jason Jones. "This pillar was a big influence early in development. It let us create a world that was hopeful, that was full of mystery, a world you wanted to be part of and to explore." And like all great open worlds, it's the spontaneous meetings, battles and finds

along en route to your self-determined locations that build the story of the game – your own mythology.

You want specific examples? We got 'em. It's moments like running into a stranger who's exploring, just like you, and finding yourself teaming up to take down a horde of enemies – all in the name of protecting Earth and amassing a vulgar amount of loot. The great thing about Destiny's enemy design is that it's inspired not just by sci-fi, but by every far-reaching corner of mythology you can find – pirates, zombies, robots, beasts and impossible machines. But if you're going to set your game across the whole solar system, you need to dig

deep for inspiration when it comes to populating it.

FIGHTING TALK

Combat was never likely to be a weak point in a game being developed by Bungie, seemingly at its leisure (the game's already been in production for at least five years). While it does owe something to the Halo series – the overall feeling of gravity in the world, player movement speed and enemy animation style – Destiny's gunplay draws from MMOs that encourage class-based combat. Titans act as tanks, taking heavy fire and dealing out the big hits, while Warlocks use their space wizardry to fire off magical powers with greater mobility. Hunters, the final confirmed class thus far, are your strongest bet for living out the decades-old Boba Fett bounty hunter fantasy, and are styled accordingly. Choosing your race along with one of these classes will work as a modifier, enabling all manner of crossbreeds.

Thankfully, there's no question of the studio losing its unique identity in the wash of Destiny's new tech. "It will be a Bungie game and absolutely have our fingerprints all over it," says COO Pete Parsons. "We want to make a game that we want to play. We want to build a universe we want to be in. And for all the justified hype surrounding its new game, the most exciting aspect remains Bungie itself. Anyone can claim to be making a shared-world shooter spanning the solar system, with seamless competitive and party play, but would you really believe them unless they happened to have the Halo series on their CV, six years of work on the project tucked under their belt, and funding from the publisher of World Of Warcraft and Call Of Duty? That, above all else, is an indication of just how momentous Destiny might be. ■



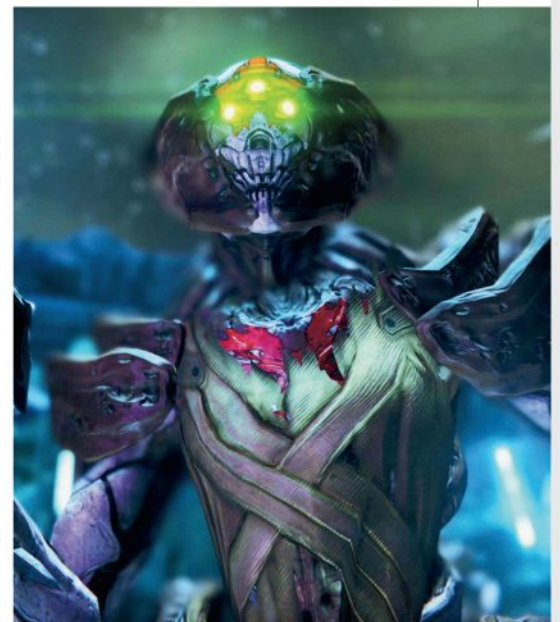
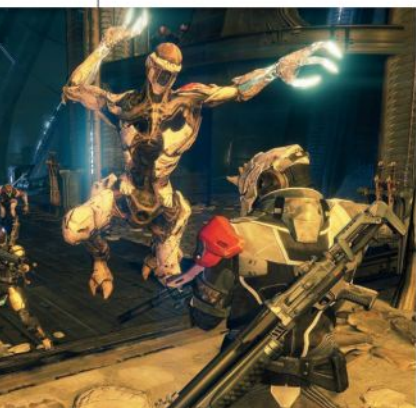


Across the galaxy you'll find eerily abandoned Moon bases, lost cities on Mars, mile-long tomb ships, and plenty of other weird and wonderful surprises.



"LIVE OUT THE BOBA FETT BOUNTY HUNTER FANTASY NOW."

Now there's the stance of a guy totally prepared to talk this one out without popping caps.



Above With a whole flippin' solar system to create – and legions of friends and foes within it – it'll be of utmost importance to avoid monotony.

It takes 90 minutes to drive from East Coast to West, and all the major US cities are represented.



"TRY THE 'DON'T PRANG ANOTHER CAR' TEST IN DETROIT. (AND GOOD LUCK.)"



Above With a promised 500+ skill tests and 200+ races, *The Crew* is quite the hefty game.

ETA SPRING / **PUB** UBISOFT
DEV IVORY TOWER/UBISOFT REFLECTIONS

THE CREW

Significantly better than *So Solid*



Sadly for loners, human company is a prerequisite to enjoying *The Crew*, a sprawling next-gen social driving experience that takes place across the entire expanse of the grand old USA. Sure, you could feasibly have fun on your own dominating point-to-point sprints down Santa Monica Boulevard, trying the 'don't prang another car' skill test in Detroit (good luck), or simply cavorting carefree through swaying Midwestern sunflower fields, but the real fun can only be found with friends.

Seamless drop-in co-op allows you to search for mates on the map, join them instantly, and then embark on hundreds of activities. For those that score a podium finish in the Racing Line challenge (you and a partner earn points by sticking to a thick neon-blue strip), Raid (find a route to the destination via experimental shortcuts), and Cop Outrun (survive as long as possible against a fleet of police cars and choppers), the rewards are XP, cash and car parts.

If your friends list is a barren wasteland, don't fret: you could fill it easily by recruiting strangers into your gang, and then either taking on the world or developing some interpersonal rivalries. So while this immensely ambitious arcade racer is perfectly serviceable alone, you'll need company to wring the most from it. It's called *The Crew* for a reason... ■

Three reasons why...

The Crew's car customisation will rock



1 Each car contains 19 elements to customise. Vehicles also have different specs: a ride built for asphalt will be drastically different to one built for dirt.



2 Unlockable perks will also impact various portions of your vehicle – increasing brake power by a percentage point or two, for example.



3 It's satisfying. Bonnets snap open, tyres fly off, and entire chassis lift up. Imagine Michael Bay turned mechanic and you're some way there.

"IT'S FULL OF WHEAT FIELDS AND THE CRAGGY CLIFF FACES OF A WEIRD ISLAND."

ETA 2014
PUB SONY / DEV TEQUILA WORKS

RIME

And reason, or so it seems



With its upcoming indie slate, the head-swapping *Puppeteer*, and now *Rime*, no one could accuse Sony of playing it safe. This is an open-world adventure from Madrid-based Tequila Works full of Ico-esque towers with spiral staircases, wheat fields shimmering in the sun and the craggy cliff faces of a mysterious island. Gameplay specifics are scarce, but with a first showing as enigmatic as this, Sony could reveal it's actually a washing-dishes-while-queueing-for-an-Adrian-Chiles-hosted-polystyrene-lecture-simulator and we'd only be a *bit* disheartened.

And the name? Either it's an extreme measure to bag a unique Google search term, or a reference to the *Rime Of The Ancient Mariner* — a Coleridge poem about man's relationship with nature, where 'Rime' is an archaic version of 'rhyme'. Or both. Maybe that poem tells us something about the shadows that surround our hero as he sits by the fireside. Is he cursed by nature? Has he been shipwrecked?

Tequila Works' previous game *Deadlight* worked the survival horror angle hard within a 2D side-scroller format, so don't expect *Rime* to be all happy-clappy island exploration. It'll certainly be interesting to chart its voyage into open-world territory from the constraints of 2D zombie-shooting. Just no one mention albatrosses, okay? ■



Above Looks like the ideal spot for a day at the beach, but we suspect things are more sinister than a paddle and a picnic.

One of the key themes seems to be an immense sense of isolation. That and craggy rocks.



ETA WINTER 2014 / PUB UBISOFT / DEV MASSIVE ENTERTAINMENT

THE DIVISION

Adding up to one of next-gen's freshest experiences



It's fair to say the apocalypse is a well-furrowed path in videogame narrative. And you, the toolled-up survivalist, might be starting to feel the blisters forming inside those size 12s after such an

exhaustive trek down that road. But where games have previously placed you *post-downfall*, piecing together the disaster that did for mankind after the fact, Ubisoft Massive's MMO-like shooter takes place *during* civilisation's meltdown.

"A lot of games are post-apocalyptic, but there aren't any that take place in a mid-crisis scenario," explains game director Ryan Barnard. "This setting could only be achieved on next-gen hardware, since we wanted to explore a very real and frightening threat to our current social collective, and showcase it as a plausible and realistic scenario. Beyond graphics,

next-gen consoles are incredibly powerful when it comes to player immersion, realism and offering huge, open worlds to explore."

The Division's version of New York, mid-meltdown, is so interesting because it's still recognisable. You imagine its state of chaos and decay could be achieved in just a couple of weeks from this very second, unlike Crysis 3's grand sci-fi concepts of a financial district suffocated by jungle.

ATTACK THE BLOCK

Unlike other apocalyptic titles, you're not just fighting for survival by stealing tins of ham from bearded lunatics. There's still some semblance of society in and among the violence, and as a member of the

eponymous Division, you're fighting to restore order. Achieve that, and the tins of ham will come to you.

"[You're] society's last hope to save New York from total collapse," Barnard continues. "[You] will fight to restore society while exploring familiar landmarks in an unfamiliar, devastated setting. New York City is a symbol, recognisable to anyone, that mirrors the complexity of our society. It's one of the most renowned locations in the world, so the contrast between what we have and what we lost will be instant and frightening to most of us."

There's a culture of fear in North America, perpetuated by rolling news channels that need big-

hitting stories around the clock, and maybe that's why The Division has struck such a chord: the chance to take an active, bullet-spewing role against the mysterious forces that generate all that fear. It's certainly clear that Massive grounds its end-of-the-world drama, in true Tom Clancy fashion, in as much reality as possible.

"The whole foundation of this game is based on realism," says Barnard.

"That's what makes our story so scary and engaging — it could actually happen. We spent months researching the subject, and the more we learned, the more frightened we became. Our objective is to create a setting that is as plausible as can be, which is why we consulted with experts and even had some of our team attend 'mid-crisis' survival training. All of this showed us how quickly everything can spiral out of control, how unprepared we are, and how vulnerable our society is."

But just what are you fighting against? In-game footage so far has showcased combat against other survivalists, but it's the pandemic itself, in its many forms, that's your chief adversary. There are sick people to help or, indeed, to euthanise.

Contaminated zones, people reduced to fighting over the scarcity of food. And, as you might suspect, there's the suspicion of a grander, Umbrella Corporation-like villain behind it all. "In every game — and especially Clancy games — there are bad guys," says Barnard. "So, there may be a really bad guy behind all this, but we don't want to give away any spoilers."

Quizzing Barnard on the theories and stories behind The Division's eye-watering reveal is encouraging, because it's clear there's a solid bedrock of fiction to support the as-yet limitless clans duking it out from Brooklyn to Manhattan. We can't wait to occupy Wall Street and beyond. ■

FACTRICK

1. CODER'S CODE

Just like us, the dev is getting used to the title, having talked of the game only in codenames until now.

2. ICE-COLD TECH

Ubisoft Massive's been developing the Snowdrop engine for years, and work on the game began in 2012.

3. UNITED WE STAND

There's no cap on clan sizes yet, so you could be in for even larger-scale battles than Battlefield 4.



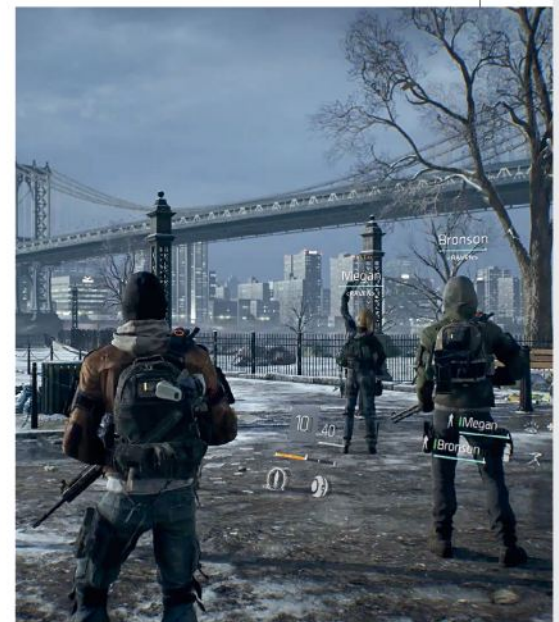
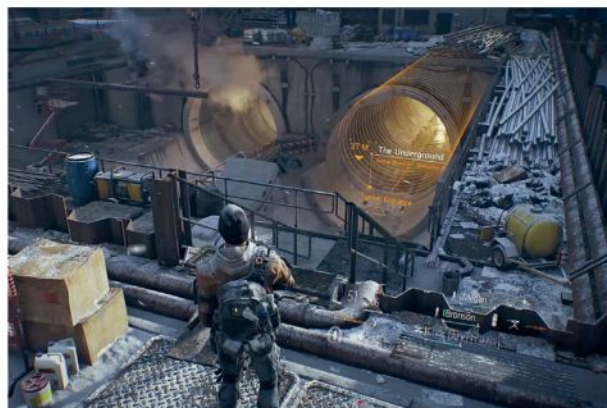


With RPG-like customisation elements to let you choose weapons, equipment and clothing, you'll be able to distinguish yourself from the Big Apple's crowds.



"PREPARE FOR CLANS FIGHTING FROM BROOKLYN TO MANHATTAN."

When society collapses, the first thing to go south is paper management of all descriptions.



Above With an enormous world map and deep-running MMO mechanics, anyone looking for a solo campaign here will need to get their social on.



In this bleak alternate future, Nazi technology is massively advanced (and rather natty, to boot).

"SLICK WITH GORE, IT'S LESS A NOD TO THE ORIGINAL – MORE A CRUSHING HEADBUTT."

ETA 2014 / PUB BETHESDA /
DEV MACHINEGAMES

WOLFENSTEIN: THE NEW ORDER

Setting the Reich tone



It's 1943. BJ Blazkowicz is comforting the new guy. The combat equivalent of Malcolm Tucker lugs a cow-sized grappling gun towards the stern walls of a Nazi fortress. It isn't *the* Castle Wolfenstein, but a love letter to the original, slick with gore. Not so much gentle nod as crushing headbutt.

The introduction to New Order couldn't be tighter. As we stomp up the grey edifice an aircraft slams into it, sending masonry cascading down around us – it's pure Inglorious Basterds, or the familiar bombast of Call Of Duty's best bits. But unlike COD, it's dynamic: within five minutes there's a coiled stealth section that unravels into double machine-gunning chaos. Around the next corner there's a hidden passage to scamper through, popping out bricks for cheeky headshots ("Peekaboo!" growls BJ). Push further and you're forced into a moral choice that leaves you quipless, snarling for revenge against biscuit-faced baddie Wilhelm 'Deathshead' Strasse.

To reiterate: this is just the *prologue*. As the story jumps to the '60s the guns get bigger, the plot thicker. With shooters getting straighter and simpler, Wolfenstein: The New Order already feels like a glorious tangle of tantalising distraction and raw carnage. Modern warfare? Nein, danke. ■

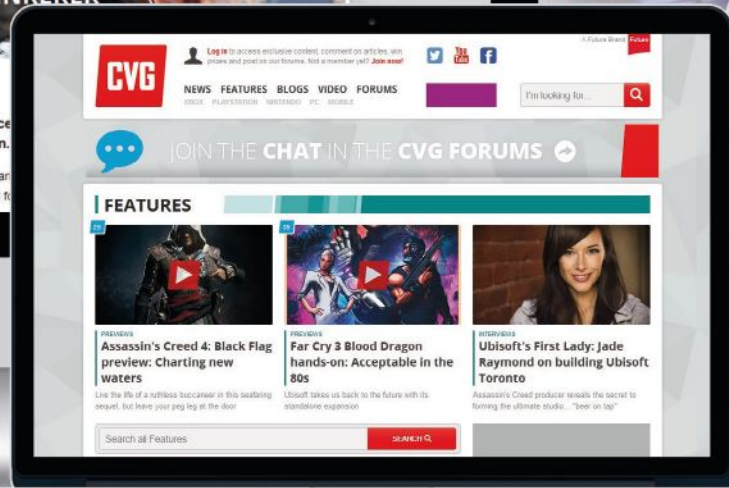
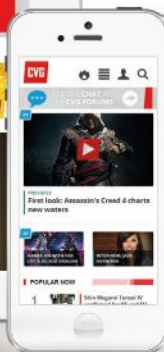
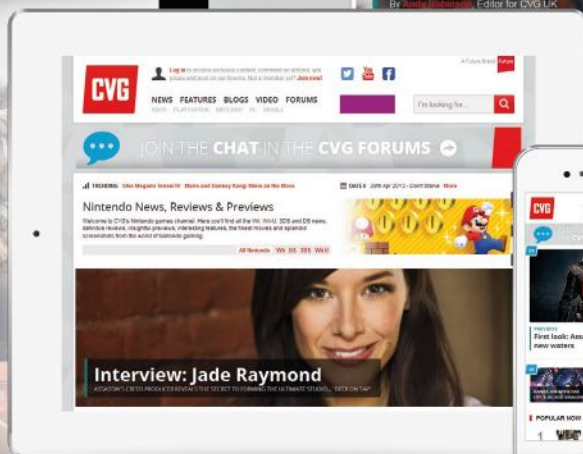


Above The Wolfenstein Rule Of Thumb: if it looks mean and kills a lot of people, it was definitely the Nazis that invented it.



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PREVIEW



"WE POKE INTO
BARRELS, ONLY TO
FIND THEM FULL OF
KWAMA EGGS."

ETA SPRING 2014 / PUB BETHESDA
DEV ZENIMAX ONLINE STUDIOS

THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE

An endless adventure to make
Skyrim look small



If you're going to spend over 150 hours staring at a character, they need to look *amazing*. Thankfully, character creation in The Elder Scrolls Online is a vast improvement on the creased fizzogs of Skyrim. We start our hands-on by trying to make a handsome Dark Elf – something of an impossibility in the previous Elder Scrolls games – and ESO's mix of sliders and scales proves pleasingly simple. You can even jump forward 150 hours to preview how your adventurer will look in the most badass armour, although it's worth remembering your selection of gear is unlimited, regardless of class. This may be a massively multiplayer game, but preserving player choice is paramount. It's the Elder Scrolls way.

Individual features can be endlessly tweaked, making the in-game gene pool seem as warm and inviting as a Skyrim hot spring. Your only limitations come from series lore: if you want to be tall and beady, go Nord rather than Wood Elf. RPG fanatics could spend days altering nose curves and eyebrow thickness, but enough of that. Adventure time.

Typically, for an Elder Scrolls game, you start in prison. Less typically, it's in the Daedric realm of Coldharbour and your soul has been removed. The good news? This grants the ability to be resurrected when you die – and by Arkay you'll need it.



PREVIEW



Left The Ebonheart Pact is made up of races that traditionally hate each other. Match made in heaven, then.

Right Good news, arachnophobes! One mission has us rescuing adventurers from huge spiders. Nasty.



The Deep Elves are from an earlier age, but their mechanical death-engines remain. Thanks, chaps!



Adventure 101

Everything you need to know about The Elder Scrolls Online



1 It's massive. The game will include the entire continent of Tamriel, which includes all of Skyrim and Cyrodiil, as well as unseen areas such as Black Marsh.



2 Three factions are vying for control of a shattered empire: the Ebonheart Pact, the Daggerfall Covenant and the Aldmeri Dominion. Pick your side.



3 All the races from Skyrim are playable, apart from the Imperials. Their armies have been torn apart, leading them into a pact with the villainous Mannimarco.



4 You can still be any kind of character you want. Certain attributes affect particular skills, but that typical Elder Scrolls freedom is the founding concept.



Above The Daggerfall Covenant aims to take control through backstabbing and politics. And maybe a bit of assassination.

"AFTER THE GRAVITAS OF BEING FANCY-PANTS DRAGONBORN, IT'S REFRESHING TO FEEL SMALL AGAIN."



Above Atronachs are back in the game, again representing various elements such as frost, fire and shock.



Above In the build we played, one Argonian 'extended the spine of gratitude' to us. We took this as a compliment.

>>

For those unfamiliar with MMOs, this is a persistent, online world so there's no pausing, and no saving your game. Die and you respawn at a Wayshrine, taking some gear damage as punishment.

Our time is limited so we skip the introduction, waking up on the harsh, frosty and suitably named Bleakrock Isle, off the coast between Skyrim and Morrowind. Zooming out on the map shows we're to the southwest of The Rift, an area any Dovahkiin will recognise. It's tantalisingly close, yet demonstrates the immensity of the ESO world. For players familiar with the voluminous history of the series, Bleakrock neatly stitches together familiar elements of Tamrielic culture — that's nerd-speak for it being half-Morrowind, half-Skyrim.

This is where The Elder Scrolls Online gets exciting. Usually in a fantasy game the thrill comes from unfamiliarity: the opposite is true here. If you've played Skyrim or Oblivion, it's amazing to have a vague awareness of your location, especially when you realise the intimidating distance between you and the nearest familiar landmark. After the gravitas of being fancy-pants Dragonborn last time out, it's refreshing to feel small again.

All of this wouldn't matter if it didn't feel like an Elder Scrolls game. Thankfully, while different, it's also reassuringly familiar. Upon waking in Bleakrock

we immediately start poking into nearby barrels, only to find them full of Kwama eggs — a provision made famous by the third Elder Scrolls game, Morrowind. Better yet, the homely shack in which we made our recovery was stuffed with scene-setting books. Unlike Skyrim you won't be able to amass a cascading library of dusty tomes, but everything you read is saved in a journal for posterity, and a few titles will be instantly recognisable to Elder Scrolls bibliophiles. Who's got a brofist for the Ruins of Kemel-Ze book club? Anyone?

Elsewhere the game is less conventional. The third-person view is over the shoulder, Resident Evil 4-style, and it feels a little unwieldy at first. Switch back to first-

person and the experience is more traditional, but the floaty character collision keeps it distinct from its chunkier predecessors. Thinner, perhaps — the sugar-free alternative to Skyrim. The scale more than makes up for this, though, and if Bleakrock Isle is anything to go by it won't just be empty space. The missions recall that organic feel of Skyrim or Oblivion, as you tumble between quest-givers through the natural course of exploration. As I leave the starting town, I'm accosted by a squeaking adventurer. She explains that after tinkering with an enchanted staff she and her friends had been turned into Skeevers — Skyrim's equivalent of the giant rat. Having recovered, she invites you to help save her friends. Cue a cheery side-quest that's a floaty distraction from the gruelling, being-dragged-into-hell main quest. Best of all, it's awesome to see the winking humour of Skyrim and Oblivion being embraced by Zenimax Online Studios.

The overall experience is like a glistening breadcrumb trail of adventure, elegantly leading you from one quest to the next. From what we've seen so far, The Elder Scrolls Online is doing a stand-up job of the typical MMO 'one more quest' hook: what will be *truly* impressive is if the rest of Tamriel is equally as dense with distractions. ■

FACTRICK

1. BACK IN THE DAY

Elder Scrolls Online takes place 1,000 years before the events of Skyrim. Talos hasn't been born yet.

2. POWER VACUUM

The lack of emperor means heavy Daedric influence. Remember Oblivion? It's like that on a planetary scale.

3. OWN THE THRONE

The endgame involves a massive rumble in Cyrodiil. The winning faction's leader will be crowned emperor.

As 'corporate shogun' at Zilla Enterprises, Lo Wang must protect Earth from otherworldly demons.



"CHOP BODY PARTS
TO USE AS WEAPONS
- LIKE A HEART THAT
CAN SHOOT FIRE."



Above "Like a bat out of hell I'll be gone when the morning comes. But first: all the burning."

Three reasons why...

Shadow Warrior may be a pleasant (if bloody) surprise



1 It's being developed by Flying Wild Hog, a mix of ex-People Can Fly (Bulletstorm) and CD Projekt Red (The Witcher series) staff.



2 It's running on PS4. The obvious power push will result in beautiful environments and silly numbers of enemies to fill them.



3 It's incredibly gory, letting players decapitate foes and even cut out their hearts - like Afro Samurai mixed with Serious Sam.

ETA SPRING 2014
PUB DEVOLVER DIGITAL / **DEV** FLYING WILD HOG

SHADOW WARRIOR

Reboot ditches stereotypes for PS4

△ 'Reboot' might not be the word. Rather, Flying Wild Hog is sticking a naked cable into the neck of the 16-year-old shooter and pumping it with 10,000 volts. How do you reconcile a Duke Nukem 3D reskin that starred a crude Asian stereotype called Lo Wang, who collects fortune cookies, fights sumo wrestlers and spouts lines like, "Are those real tits?" with current sensibilities?

Well, by not being racist. Or sexist. Shadow Warrior's been given a politically correct makeover, understandably removed the more offensive elements, and tossed Wang back into the mix, aided by a banished spirit named Hoji, to track down a legendary blade and save humanity from demons.

CARRY KATANA

With the more controversial elements eradicated, the focus shifts to the sheer bloody violence. The original was the first FPS to introduce sticky bombs, but Wang's katana is the star of the show. It's a precision tool: the more ornate the cut, the higher the score. He can also lop off body parts to use as weapons - disembodied hearts, say, can shoot fire. So, while Shadow Warrior might have (thankfully) matured in some areas, it's shaping up to retain a dab of delicious derangement. Keep an eye, rather than a preorder, on this slice of Eastern promise. ■

"IF YOU STRUGGLE,
CONTROLLERS HAVE
A WAY OF TURNING
INTO BATARANGS."

ETA 2014
PUB UBISOFT / DEV REDLYNX

TRIALS FUSION

The ride of your spine-shattered life

△ DualShock 4 being sturdier than its predecessor is a very good thing. Because anybody who's played one of Redlynx's notoriously devilish Trials games will tell you that, when you're struggling to clear a seemingly impossible hurdle in the 2.5D motorcycle platformer for the hundredth time, pads have a strange way of turning into Batarangs. And Batarangs are expensive to replace.

PSN effort Urban Trial Freestyle made an admirable attempt at cracking the formula of Redlynx's coveted bike-handling physics, but PlayStation fans still had to content themselves with a reasonable facsimile instead of the genuine article. Not for much longer: the Trials series is finally coming to PlayStation.

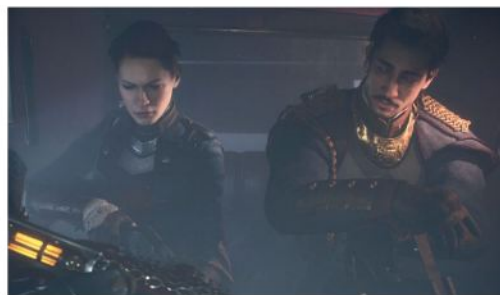
Our first look at Fusion shows a rider soaring through a cloud-piercing sky metropolis, pulling outrageous stunts for points. The platforming challenges that define the series will presumably return, and it doesn't hurt that PS4's Share button is tailor-made for Trials, either. The series manages to soften the psychological trauma of its bruising difficulty by making crashes a masterpiece of slapstick comedy. So if you're terrible, you'll share your faceplants for laughs — and if you've spent weeks becoming the Yo-Yo Ma of bikes, then you'll want to share your exploits for old-fashioned brag value. Either way, you win. But mostly you just crash. ■



Above Playing at home not enough for you? Take your game on the road, as Trials Frontier on mobile interacts with Fusion.

Fusion adds extreme stunts to the trusty front and backflips of previous series instalments.

PREVIEW



■ London's locked down like a high-security prison at night, but our intrepid gunslingers make their way through checkpoints and barricades to fight the beasts.



"ENEMIES ARE SHROUDED IN MIST, BUT THEY AREN'T HERE TO FIX THE DRAINS."

My Chemical Romance merch was even more popular in 1886 than in 2004, apparently.



Above Looks pretty Victorian to us. Not even the merest trace of neck or ankle showing on that enormous-rifle-toting lady.





ETA 2014 / PUB SONY / DEV READY AT DAWN STUDIOS/SONY SANTA MONICA

THE ORDER: 1886

God Of War dev rewrites history to sex up Victorian London



Aren't you glad you were born in the modern age instead of Victorian times? The poverty, the 'imperfect' sewers, inhuman horrors lurking in the foggy streets at night? Good job we nailed the

whole Industrial Revolution thing and beat them down for good, right? Okay, that bit totally didn't happen, but developer Ready At Dawn hopes you might find it at least a faintly plausibly alt-history of Dickensian Britain – it's the narrative core of new third-person action shooter *The Order: 1886*. Go on. Guess which year it's set in.

Its supernatural enemies are purposely shrouded in that famous Lahndahn mist in the sliver of footage showcased when the game was revealed, but they sure aren't here to improve the drains. Nothing you're equally supernatural (or at least history book-tearing) armoury of energy weapons can't handle, of course. In keeping with the neo-Victorian art direction, which owes a lot to Dishonored, Thief and a dash of Bioshock Infinite, your weapons carry the ornate engravings of centuries ago, but emit blue death-pulses the likes of which are seldom seen outside of mad scientists' fantasies.

FACTRICK

1. CRUEL BRITANNIA

It's set in an alternative Industrial Revolution-era Britain, with unknown horrors filling the streets.

2. ARMS RACE

Weapons range from historically accurate pistols to energy weapons that'd be at home in Doom 3.

3. GODS OF GOW

It's a collaborating between GOW dev Sony Santa Monica and, erm, GOW PSP dev Ready At Dawn Studios.

INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH

Early indications suggest you'll feel anything but overpowered, though. Outnumbered, surrounded and blinded by smog, the cast of *The Order's* moody reveal back nervously up to their carriage, tracking menacing shapes with their sights. It's a lot like a chapter in Victorian Gothic

classic Dracula involving guns, wolves, mist, and a carriage, suggesting considerable thought and effort has been spent on giving this PS4 exclusive an air of authenticity and depth. Besides making you feel clever for referencing a book, the game also uses its environment as both a character and an enemy. Any of you who played ten minutes of *Fuse* will know how important not cutting that corner is.

In *The Order*, the Industrial Revolution was the catalyst that turned the tide on millennia-old war, and, perhaps because the stakes were so high and the era's brightest inventors worked a few extra all-nighters, you'll find more advanced technology

than you'd expect. Exhibit A: zeppelin gunships. The familiar Big-Ben-graced skyline is enveloped by one of these just before the aforementioned carriage standoff. Let's hope it's heading in the right direction to save your ass.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Ready At Dawn doesn't treat Victorian London like *Saints Row IV* treats presidential responsibilities, though – there's familiar, accurate history at the foundation of the universe. It seems developers often forget what a rich storytelling resource history can be, often eschewing period settings for 'near future in which everything's orange or blue'. But it was a desire to tap the olden days' narrative goldmine that formed the genesis of *The Order: 1866*, according to Ready At Dawn. It's been in production since 2010, and on the studio's to-do list for even longer.

If you've not heard of the studio, that's because it's specialised in PSP until now, putting out two *God Of War* games – *Chains Of Olympus* and *Ghost Of Sparta* – that nailed the art of cramming a blockbuster into handheld. The primary *God Of War* studio, Sony Santa Monica, is also working in collaboration with Ready At Dawn, so there's pedigree behind the code. Just don't expect Kratos in a deerstalker punching tweed-clad men.

Instead, *The Order* plunges down a cinematic path, doling out action only when your nerves are taut as razor wire. One of the project's key goals is to ape big-screen cinematography like no game before it, and if that means exploring via filmic cutscenes and grand set-pieces rather than scuttling up and down repeated alleyways, chase that dream, devs. There's an encouraging clan of new IPs emerging for PS4, and even in such esteemed company *The Order* looks set to merit a place in the history books. ■

PREVIEW

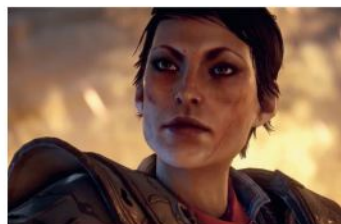


■ Inquisition is made up of many self-enclosed areas, but even the 'medium'-sized of these is bigger than every area in Dragon Age II put together.

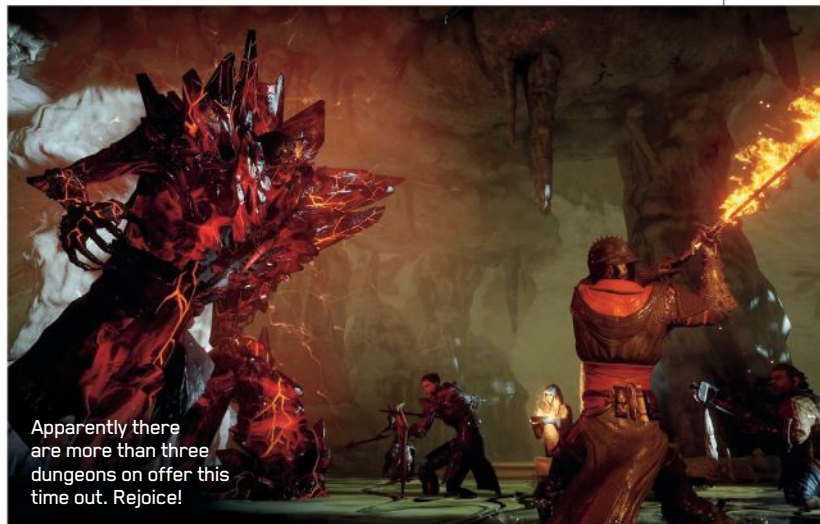
"SPY A GROUP OF ARCHERS ON A RICKETY BEAM AND YOU CAN TAKE THEM DOWN IN ONE BY TARGETING THE STRUCTURE."



Conquer a keep and you can make it either a political, military or espionage stronghold.



Above Using web app Dragon Age Keep, you can shape the world as you wish.



Apparently there are more than three dungeons on offer this time out. Rejoice!

ETA AUTUMN 2014
PUB EA / DEV BIOWARE

DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION

A touch of Frostbite for Bioware's generation-straddling sequel



Hoping to recapture the glory of 2009's (admittedly divisive) Origins and erase memories of a rushed sequel, Bioware is enlisting the help of DICE's difference-maker: the much-trumpeted Frostbite 3 engine that powers Battlefield 4's supermodel looks.

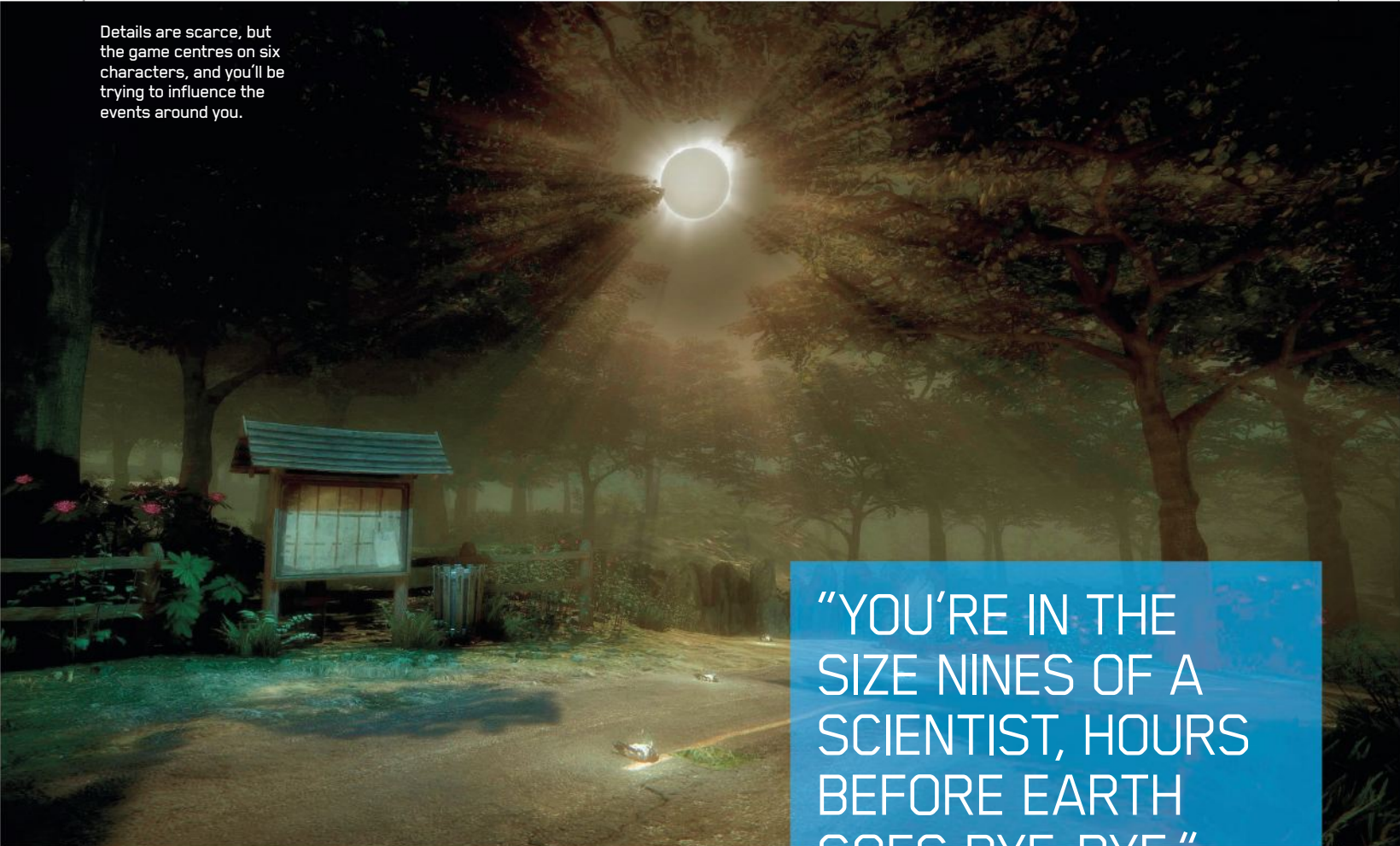
"It's an opportunity with the generation change, as well as the new engine, to revitalise things," says producer Cameron Lee. "We've rebuilt everything from the ground up." It's a fresh start for players, too. With dreary hero Hawke gone, you're able to customise your own fully-voiced avatar and embark on a quest that sees you sniff out the solution to a series of Fade rifts spilling demons into Thedas.

As well as increasing visual fidelity, Frostbite 3 has important applications behind the scenes. Loading has been drastically chopped, and you can now enter caves and mines seamlessly (the overworld is still split into self-enclosed environments Mass Effect-style, mind), and combat comes alive through environmental destruction. "We want players to look at a battle space and think, 'What opportunities do I have to destroy something?'" says Lee. Spy a group of archers on a rickety beam, for instance, and you can take them down in one fell swoop by targeting the structure. Capable of bigger levels, better looks and more combat complexity, Frostbite might just hold the key to getting Dragon Age back on track. ■



Above Hawke's been given the elbow for a customisable player-created hero.

Details are scarce, but the game centres on six characters, and you'll be trying to influence the events around you.



"YOU'RE IN THE SIZE NINES OF A SCIENTIST, HOURS BEFORE EARTH GOES BYE-BYE."

ETA 2014 / PUB SONY / DEV THE CHINESE ROOM

EVERYBODY'S GONE TO THE RAPTURE

98, 99, 100... ready or not, here I – oh



A refreshing take on the apocalypse, this. There's not a zombie in sight – developer The Chinese Room leaves that to the likes of *Dying Light*, *Ray's The Dead*, *The Walking Dead Season Two* and anyone else with an interest in the end of days and a computer science degree. *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture's* dark future looks positively cheery by comparison: a CryEngine 3-powered, first-person narrative adventure that puts you in the sweaty size nines of a scientist in the final hours before all life on Earth goes bye-bye.

If you played the Brighton-based studio's previous game *Dear Esther* on PC, you'll know what to expect. Minimal interaction, zero mechanics, lustrous production values and more voiceover than a Herzog documentary. The game challenged the nature of storytelling in the medium, placing it above all else on the shores of a bleak island. It guided you from place to place with a light source here, a building there, each location prompting another slice of narrative delivered by a man who could make cereal ingredients sound unbearably heartbreaking.

Except you won't know what to expect, because The Chinese Room knows what you're expecting.

Unlike its predecessor's largely linear design this is an open world to explore at your will, and its haunting beauty surpasses even the frankly ridiculous visuals *Dear Esther* managed to drum out of the ancient source engine. Thanks again, Crytek. The team's also keen to experiment with the formula by adding a new, top-secret component we have no idea about but firmly believe will be – whisper it – mapped to ⊗.

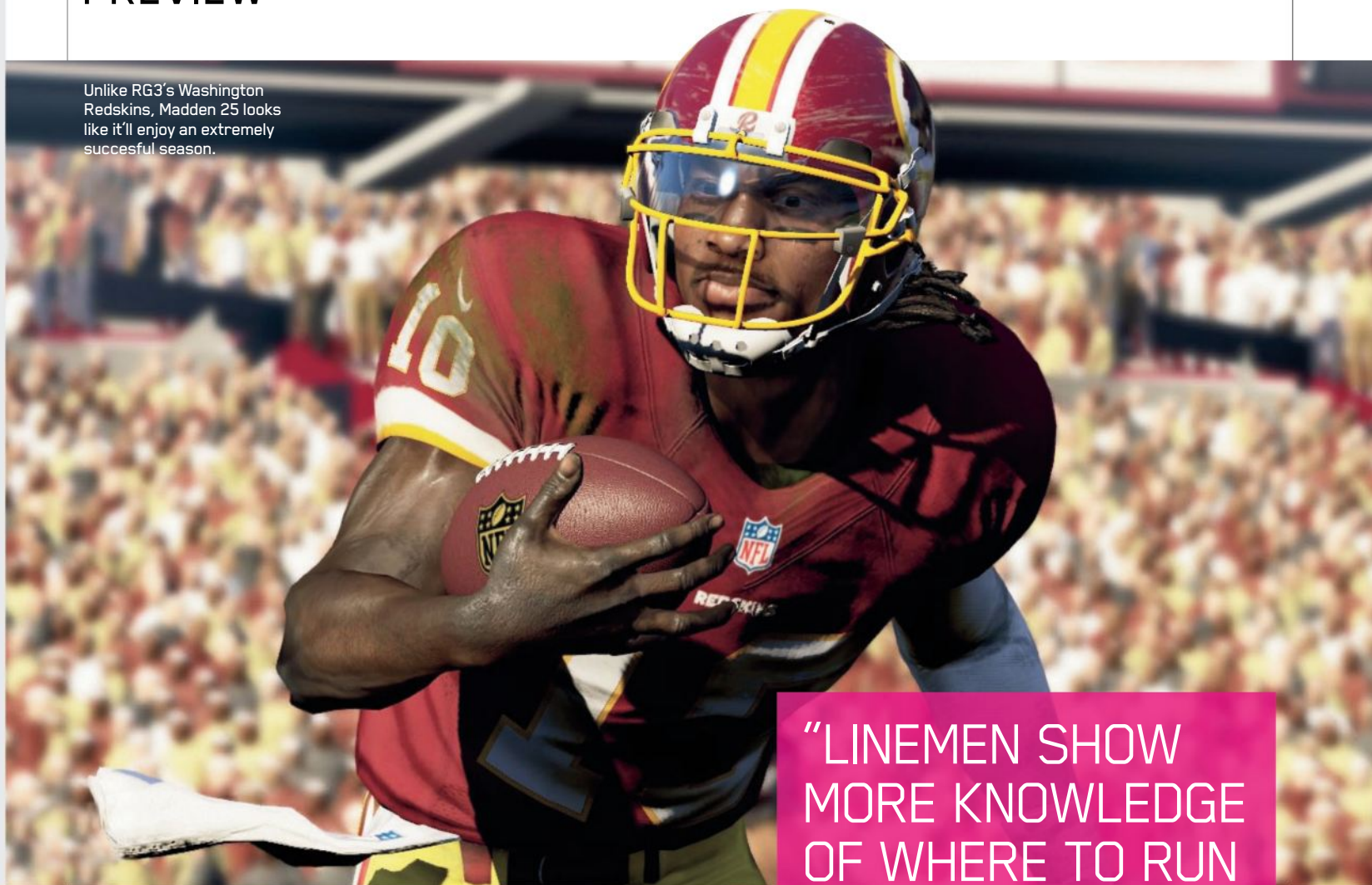
DON'T SHOOT

The Chinese Room's games aren't for everyone. For some its first-person narrative design will feel like playing an on-rails shooter that's been sabotaged by anti-gun protesters (and anti-jump protesters. Don't get Jonathan Edwards started on that lot), but if you like your games challenging, brooding and poured slowly so you can savour each moment, this surprise PS4 exclusive might just be your favourite next-gen proposition. ■



Above What if the end of the world took place in a rural English village? Well, it'd be one seriously picturesque apocalypse, that's for sure.

Unlike RG3's Washington Redskins, Madden 25 looks like it'll enjoy an extremely successful season.



"LINEMEN SHOW MORE KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE TO RUN – AND WHO THEY CAN MONSTER."

ETA 29 NOV / PUB EA / DEV EA TIBURON

MADDEN NFL 25

In with the new and the Oldenburg



09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 25... wait, what? Just when you thought EA's numbering conventions were sacrosanct, the biggest publisher in sports gaming affixes two non-sequential digits to its newest gridiron effort. But there's method to the apparent madness, this being the 25th edition of the game bearing Johnboy's name since its 1988 inception.

The name will fast become an irrelevance on release anyway, so long as the game turns out to be more New Orleans Saints gold than New York Jets gangrene. The megabucks series has stagnated during the course of the past two seasons – prioritising quantity over quality with regard to new features – but a much clearer focus on making the strong stuff stand out should ensure that Madden finally returns to form when it debuts on PS4.

Ironically, the most exciting change is one that's arisen not from looking forwards to next-gen, but back to the PS2 era. Owner mode, a staple of Maddens 04-08 (and the single best 'dynasty' mode in any game series at the time), makes its return after years of campaigning from fans. Your control over a team is no longer restricted to signing and drafting players, and picking a line-up – you can also

hire trainers and scouts, and choose to micro-manage every last dollar of your team finances, right down to setting different prices for specific player jerseys. So '\$85 for Dez Bryant, \$1 for Tony Romo', should you choose to be Dallas Cowboys kingpin Jerry Jones. (And you can – every real owner is included in the game.)

DENVER POST

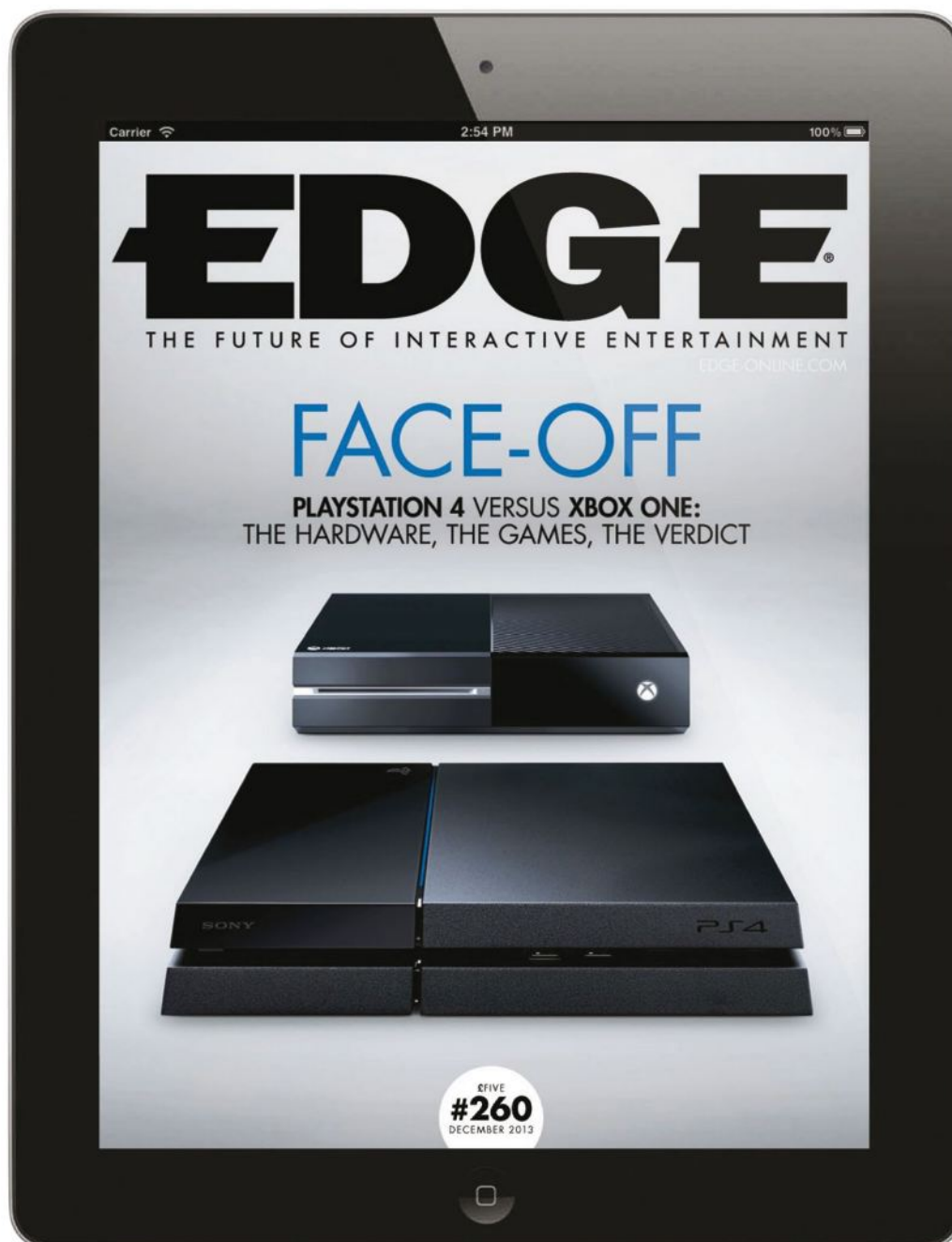
On the pitch, the focus is still on authentic smash-mouth football, with significantly improved intelligence on the offensive line after dev EA Tiburon brought former NFL player Clint Oldenburg aboard in an advisory role. His influence is already clear, as linemen show more awareness of players attacking the quarterback (giving you more time to throw), and of where to run (and who to monster) once you take off with ball in hand. Promising signs, then, as Madden looks to reinvent itself in a similar vein to Peyton Manning's Broncos. ■



Above With EA's Ignite engine aiming to nail the physicality of real sport, it's best you avoid opponents by any means possible.

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BIG SHOT

BATTLEFIELD 4

■ ETA 29 NOV / PUB EA / DEV DICE



The megaton blaster gets even more destructive on PS4, with vast 64-player deathmatches featuring dynamically changing maps. Levelling a skyscraper can turn the events of a game, while the return of Battlefield 2's Commander Mode gives players an RTS-like view of the terrain. Driven by the Frostbite 3 engine this is next-gen's most advanced shooter.

BIG SHOT



Tombstone Squad
star in single-player's
mini-sandbox levels.

The PS4 Mastermind

OPM meets console creator Mark Cerny to discuss Sony's new baby, making Knack, and his career highlights

You may know him as 'that guy who made PS4', but in many ways Mark Cerny is more than 'just' the lead system architect who built that beautiful black box – he *is* PlayStation. A Sony consultant for over a decade, he's responsible for giving Insomniac and

Naughty Dog their first breaks, and has been involved in everything from Spyro and Crash Bandicoot, to God Of War and Resistance. He's currently working on Knack for PS4.

We caught up with him at this year's Develop conference, where during his keynote he spoke at length about PS4's x86-64 chip architecture that allows different cores to focus on separate tasks simultaneously...

OPM: In your keynote, you mentioned personally researching the x86 processor. When did that begin? Was it the origin of PS4?

Mark Cerny: I and a number of others, particularly [Sony]'s internal technologies teams, were involved from summer '07 – in the sense of doing a post-mortem on PS3. Actual work on PS4 didn't start until 2008.

OPM: So what was the next step after deciding the x86 was going to be the thing?

MC: I wasn't deciding whether the x86 would be the chip. I was trying to work out





Mark Cerny worked on each prior generation of PlayStation before designing PS4's innards.

THE OPM INTERVIEW

“OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, YOU’LL SEE IMPROVEMENTS IN GRAPHICS AS DEVELOPERS START TO UNLOCK PS4’S SECRETS.”

» whether it would be *an option*. If your only option is the Power PC, it’s very restrictive in terms of hardware vendors. If you can also use the x86, you can talk to anyone out there who makes technology.

OPM: What were people saying about the x86?

MC: Because of its very long history, the x86 is rather complex. You can run code today that was written for the original chip in 1978. They just kept adding things for [over 30] years. If you read an x86 manual, it takes pages to explain all the different ways that you can move data from one register to another, based on all the additions to the architecture over the years. It’s a bit overwhelming from that perspective. Also, it gets very technical. It’s a CISC architecture rather than RISC architecture. There was definitely a first-party voice that said [the x86] probably couldn’t be used in a games console.

OPM: How did you address that?

MC: The first real interaction that we had with the game teams was talking to first-party about the x86 and explaining why we felt that finally it was useable in a console. We made 15 separate presentations. We went from morning to mid-afternoon going through how we felt the time had come. We knew we needed to show that our dedication and our concern was just as high as the game teams’. The presentation we did was so long that one of the teams was stranded on the tarmac for five hours, and they still arrived before we finished going through all the materials we prepared.

OPM: In terms of PS4’s tech, what do you think will have the most immediate impact?

MC: Accessibility. We have 140 titles in development right now, [because] it’s very easy to make games for the system. [In that respect] things are pretty much how they were in the PS1 days. Then over the next few years, as



Cerny’s decision to use the x86 chip at PS4’s heart was seen as a leftfield choice.



Top Our man explains how you can spell BOOBIES on a calculator. Interview ends.
Left Cerny gave Naughty Dog its first deal... **Right** ...and is currently directing Knack.

programmers get the chance to dig deeper, [you’ll see] improvements in graphics and simulation as PS4’s secrets are unlocked. That will happen because we did extensive customisation of the GPU in PS4.

OPM: You say ‘unlocking the secrets’ – does that mean devs mastering the tech, or discovering things they had no idea were in there initially?

MC: Because the architecture is fixed – like any console – developers get the chance to get very familiar with it, in a way they wouldn’t with some PCs. We will see that, just as we’ve seen with every previous generation. They will also see the improvements we’ve made with the GPU in areas such as asynchronous fine-grain compute.

NEED TO KNOW



1984

MARBLE MADNESS

■ As lead designer of the mini-golf-inspired hit, Cerny pushes the boundaries of game creation with dynamic environments right from the off.

1994

UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE STUDIOS

■ Taking the reins at a company that "didn't understand the games business", Cerny swiftly signs up both Naughty Dog and Insomniac.

2013

PS4 REVEAL

■ Masterminding PS4's development alongside Shuhei Yoshida and Andrew House, Cerny unveils the DualShock 4 at February's PlayStation Meeting.

doing that, you finally get your custom chip back from the foundry and then you build prototype hardware that can look like anything. It can look like a PC; it can look like a lunchbox on your desk...

OPM: So it's not all bulldog clips and loose wires...

MC: No. I mean, the very first prototypes tend to be larger, as form factor isn't that important. So the hardware team might have some massive board with some chips plugged into it. But by the time any developer sees it, it's [nothing like that].

OPM: PS Vita combining with PS4 makes a lot more sense than it did with PS3. Was that the intention when the handheld was originally designed?

MC: That's a very hard question to answer. Vita was designed in the same rough period of time as PS3. And clearly we knew that Remote Play was an important part of the PlayStation ecosystem when we designed Vita.

OPM: What should the casual gamer know about PS4?

MC: The most important thing is that it's the most powerful games console ever created.

OPM: PS3 has lasted seven years and counting. Do you expect a similar life cycle from PS4?

MC: It looks pretty healthy to me. The PS4 cycle will be pretty much like the PS3 cycle.

OPM: To what extent do you try to predict the future when launching a console such as this?

MC: We very intentionally put in a lot of features for developers to use in the years of the console lifetime. The launch titles are not likely to use

OPM: PS4 is minimalistic in terms of ports, at least compared to PS3. Is that Sony being more economical, or they're simply all you need?
MC: What else would there be?

OPM: Launch PS3s had a memory card slot...
MC: It had SD card and memory stick [slots].

OPM: I was just surprised PS4 is so minimal.
MC: It has what we think it needs.

OPM: Fair enough. When you first discussed PS4 with developers, what was the most surprising piece of feedback you received?

MC: The most surprising feedback I got was [that they wanted] unified memory. I had not expected that to be the number one request from developers – [even] PS2 didn't have unified memory, if you go back that far.

OPM: What is the benefit?

MC: It's speed of development, and it's flexibility. The way it works on PS3 is that the graphical assets go into one pool of memory and your programmatic assets tend to go in another. The memory is divided equally, and your graphics assets might not be half of what you have. So generally, when you're using memory that isn't unified like that, you end up having to do a lot of shuffling between the pools to make your game work.

OPM: Initially building PS4 – or indeed any console – I presume it's a load of circuits and other bits on a table. What forms the box?

MC: What you're doing is designing a very large custom chip board – in our case, two. That process is almost like writing a program. Chips are compiled these days. After several years of

them – they're likely to use the hardware in a straightforward way. Then, over time, SPU's not used much by launch titles get progressively [integrated], to the point where something like The Last Of Us saturates them. You'll see the same kind of adoption of more sophisticated techniques during PS4's life cycle.

OPM: You led development on Knack. Is that the most directly involved you've been with a single game of late?

MC: In the PS3 generation I was on the first Uncharted, Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction, God Of War 3, Killzone 3, and Resistance 1 and 2. But as a part-time consultant on those games, it was very hard to come in externally and do something significant for each. Whereas on Crash Bandicoot 2, I essentially laid out the entire game – if you picked up an apple, I put that apple there, pretty much. I did that as a part-timer. In the modern era, you have very talented full-time designers – several of them. I ended up doing things like usability testing, or script doctoring, or trying to optimise the shader code.

OPM: Where did the idea for Knack's fragmented body come from?

MC: The original concept was that we wanted [to appeal to] two audiences. We wanted the feeling of nostalgia, but also something for the light gamers – something where pretty much anybody could pick it up and play it, regardless of whether they played games regularly or not. I think it's nice if there are games that are that accessible on the easy setting. As far as the character goes, we were looking for an international audience. If you have a character like we used to make back in the day – Crash, Jak, Ratchet, Spyro, Sonic – those tend to look like American characters, or Japanese characters. They have a country of origin. That means that in some countries it's going to feel like something foreign coming in. We wanted something that was a bit more international in feel. So we thought, 'Hey let's have a character that's really a special effect. Let's have a character that can pick up things from the environment and grow.' As it turns out, that was quite difficult to implement. It took about a year and a half to get from that concept to the character of Knack you see today.

OPM: You mention games like Uncharted and Resistance, and indeed you've been involved with PlayStation throughout your career. Which moments stand out as personal highlights?

MC: For me, there was this very fun time when we had Crash Bandicoot and Parappa The Rapper coming out at the same time, and while they weren't official mascots, they were being used internationally to express the fun of PS1. That was a very special time. A lot of what I think about on the hardware side [when it comes to] the games is how to bring some of that feeling back to PlayStation – without moving away from the core titles that people love, such as Assassin's Creed. ■



BIG SHOT

FIFA 14

ETA 29 NOV / PUB EA / DEV EA CANADA

.....



There's little to surprise in EA's PlayStation 4 footy debut, but that doesn't mean this is any less exciting. The PS3 version is already the best football game going; next-gen adds incredibly lifelike visuals, authentic-looking crowds and almost-human player intelligence. Plus with no PES on PS4 until next year, it's in a one-horse race for the championship. Take a bow, son.

.....



BIG SHOT

Milan and Dortmund
tussle for the 'best
PS4 haircut' crown.





Who's a pretty boy?
Those iconic orange
eyes have never looked
purdier thanks to PS4.

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

ETA 29 Nov Pub Sony Dev Guerrilla Games

KILLZONE SHADOW F L L A

Taking a combat knife to
last-gen's FPS rulebook

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

Yes, it's another excuse to sample the meaty weaponry and show-stopping set-pieces that Guerrilla nails with every harrowing Helghan homicide it releases. But Shadow Fall is genuinely more than that. It might leap 30 years forwards in its narrative, but for gameplay and visuals that jump is more like a hot-foot down the fast lane of a particle accelerator. Next-gen FPS gaming starts precisely here.

Which is why it's so encouraging that new Killzone: Shadow Fall isn't leaning up against its show-stopping graphics and having a quick cigarette, confident of winning over PS4 gamers by virtue of its sprawling draw distances and high-res Higgs. Instead Guerrilla leads from the front by setting a positive example to the Treyarchs and DICES watching from the wings: using PS4's tech not to spruce up the old template, but to push some genre boundaries. All those extra gigawatts, nanohertz and bionic FLOP unicorns of next-gen power are being harnessed to create, as executive producer Angie Smets puts it, "a more human drama... something a lot more personal and emotional."

That's not to say the veteran first-party studio is throwing out the lead-booted baby with the bathwater – going hands-on with Shadow Fall feels very familiar on one level. Player movement's still heavy, even sluggish, and weapons still feel as though they were repurposed from industrial-age machinery and are powered by a coal furnace. We wouldn't have it any other way.

ON YOUR RADAR

But beyond that initial comfy old shoe sensation, a lot's changed. Like its Vita cousin Killzone Mercenary, it's a stealthier shooter, if you want it to be. Tap up on the DualShock 4's D-pad and you'll send out an echo pulse that flags up nearby enemies as red wireframes like a 3D sonar system. Hold it down longer and the pulse reaches further, allowing for some careful forward planning. Did somebody say 'brutal melee takedowns'? (Unironically, and everything?) Yep, they're back and live up to their name like never before, this time enabling you to swoop down from above and insta-kill those pesky wireframes

without raising a single eyebrow.

Don't worry, though: the more 'spirited' among us can still tear about shooting everyone and everything in sight like Trevor Philips on too many sherbet dips. In fact, doing so acquaints you with OWL, who's nothing like as cute as it sounds. Your own personal airborne attack drone (so Santa did get the list!) can lob a pulse bomb at enemies and stun them, attack with its mounted machine gun, or (if you're a sandal-wearing surrender-monkey) deploy a shield or create zip-lines and move to more advantageous terrain. All with a flick of the pad.

We've got ahead of ourselves, because you barely know who you're setting OWL on, do you? Alright, so you made an educated guess that it'd be the same perpetually hoarse race of gas mask fetishists from Killzones 1-3, and you're right on the money. But if you'd kindly stop kissing your biceps for a second, we'd tell you that in the 30 years since the credits rolled on Killzone 3, the universe has changed significantly.

Three decades of war have left the Helghan's home planet in a

"THERE ARE SO MANY CHARACTERS THAT THE CITY FEELS ALIVE."

worse state of repair than Jimmy Carr's self-assessment forms. Much more lenient than the inland revenue, the ISA grants the race a refugee state on Vekta – a shiny planet that calls to mind the oil-rich Arab states of today (not going *near* a real-world parity discussion here). An enormous wall separates the indigenous denizens from the bloodthirsty refugees reflecting on several decades of slaughter on the other side. That'll probably go really well.

Unless you're explosion-blind, you saw exactly how well that goes when Shadow Fall was revealed at the PS4 reveal in February. Behind the terror attack is a splinter group called the Black Hand, who believe the Vektans preach peace and love, but practice racism and oppression. That's where you come in. As a peacekeeper with some blurry lines to deal with. For a genre that's happy to greenlight premises that amount to 'guy is angry, has weapons', Shadow Fall's sounds encouragingly thoughtful.

And it's a handy coincidence for Guerrilla that a futuristic city like

Vekta's capital is a great way to show off your next-gen graphical chops. Game director Steven ter Heide tells us Shadow Fall couldn't have been made on PS3: "It's running in 1080p, whereas the last game was running in 720p – that immediately makes a difference. The particle resolution had to be very low, but because we've got loads more memory [now] we can have higher particle resolutions. More HDR lighting gives lots more range in the type of light we have in this level – both the amount of post-processing effects, and the quality of these effects. That's the kind of thing people notice when looking at the difference between PS3 and PS4. The games look prettier." It's not like devs to go with understatement – they're usually too busy finding new and exciting ways to say 'awesome' in a single sentence – but ter Heide has pulled it off.

KARMA CHAMELEON

PS4's able to handle sufficient on-screen characters that the City really does feel alive, before trigger fingers get itchy at least. It's a densely-populated metropolis, but it's just one colour (alright, two: no-one told Guerrilla that orange and blue are so overused they're actually a meme) on Shadow Fall's palette. Vekta also hosts some startlingly lush natural geography that throws the previous game's 'rust or bust' colour scheme out of the window. Forests in a Killzone game: the future is now!

This is how you do a launch shooter: a little of the familiar, a little more eye candy, and a lot of bravery and innovation. Killzone hasn't suddenly become the skinny jeans-wearing crossbreed of Minecraft and Dear Esther in a floundering attempt to be hip – the original DNA's still tangible. But setting foot onto Vekta doesn't feel like another chapter in the series' story. It feels like the momentous first chapter of next-gen shooting, and it's gonna be a real page-turner.

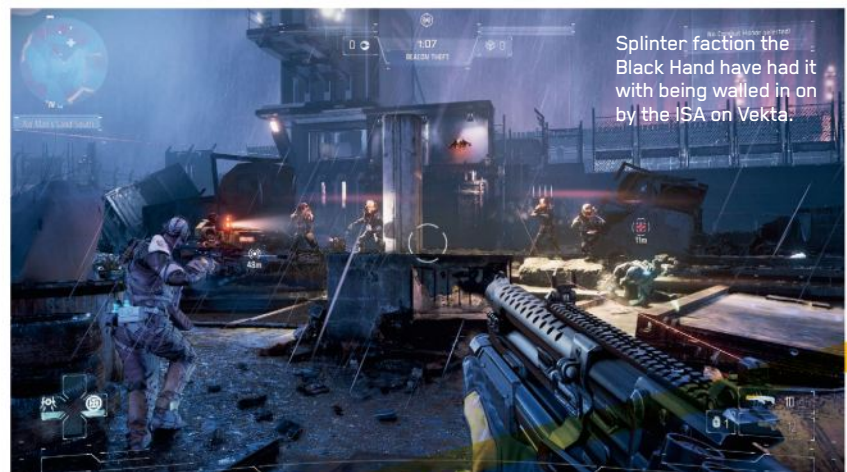




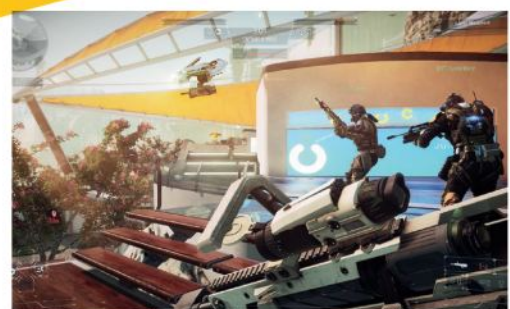
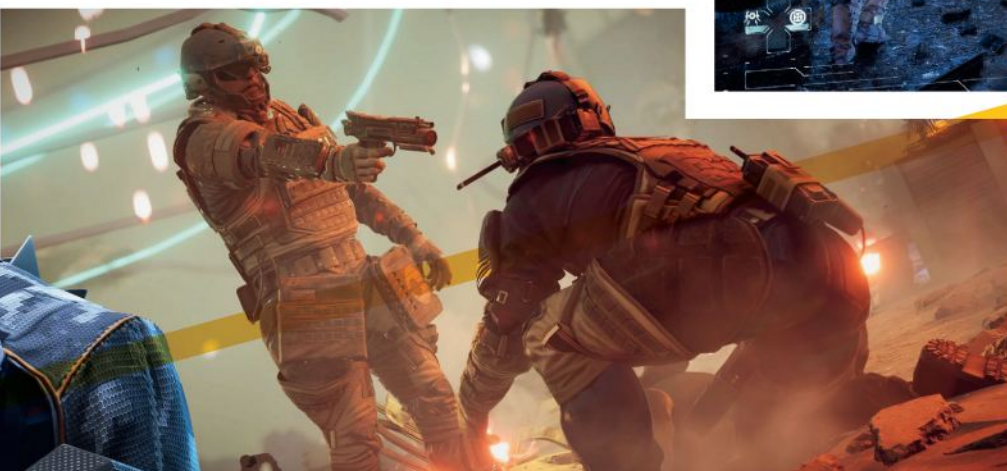
Volumetric lighting and smoke effects have come a long way since Shadow Fall's E3 demo.



Meet OWL, your friendly personal slaughter-bot. Don't be shy, give it a stroke. It likes it.



Splinter faction the Black Hand have had it with being walled in on by the ISA on Vekta.



Above Predictably, Shadow Fall's lighting and particle effects are utterly glorious. Good job, Guerrilla.

BIG SHOT



Ferraris return to NFS for the first time in nearly a decade.

BIG SHOT

NEED FOR SPEED RIVALS

ETA 29 NOV / PUB EA / DEV GHOST GAMES

Following on from Criterion's brilliantly seamless Most Wanted, newly formed studio Ghost Games looks to redefine the racing genre with AllDrive. A hugely ambitious system powered by next-gen thinking, it looks to blur the lines between single and multiplayer by interweaving all objectives online so you can experience every feature with your friends.



WATCH DOGS

CTOS

The game's online play is powered by the PlayStation 4's powerful hardware, which allows for a seamless and immersive experience. The game's online play is powered by the PlayStation 4's powerful hardware, which allows for a seamless and immersive experience.

CTYL40

Remote Access Enabled

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Even the star-packed sandbox genre has never seen a game like Watch Dogs. We head online with the brightest prospect on PlayStation 4

Michaelis, Lena
110s Power Value
Age: 43
Occupation: Retail Sales
Income: \$38,100

Aiden Pearce and PS4 share a deep philosophical bond. No, it's not that they'd both like to secretly spy on you while you're sprawled out on the couch, DualShock in hand. Rather, both Ubisoft Montreal's hack-happy vigilante and Sony's developer-friendly super machine are both squarely focused on connection – whether that's harnessing the peeping power of an entire city's surveillance system or a Share button that will open up the possibilities of socially driven console gaming like never before. With Watch Dogs on PS4, you really will be able to go everywhere and see everything any time you desire.

"The biggest thing when we started is that we knew the evolution of gaming would definitely involve connectivity and online in different

hacking a helicopter via a tablet app, helping Pearce to peg it away from the fuzz. But as Morin explains to us, this feature is even more ambitious than we'd first predicted.

APP OF HONOUR

"The idea has always been to allow players to take their phones or tablets anywhere in the world, use the Watch Dogs application, and then be able to play in real time with people on any console, or else we aren't doing our jobs," he says. Like PSN masterpiece Journey, Ubisoft's open-world espionage tale is pushing the online envelope, and being able to interact with other players while slouched on that number 37 to work is merely the hotdog-stuffed pizza

single-player contacts menu, furthering the notion that all parts of the game really are interlinked.

"Having other players able to hack into your game, and come and watch you, is a unique experience. That includes those people who have tablets, who can show up and challenge you, fight against you, and do all sorts of things to control the city – like controlling the choppers that are flying around." Of course, if you don't want prying eyes peeking into your adventure, you can always switch these online features off, something Morin elaborates on: "When a companion challenges you, it's a contract that you'll accept or not – it won't happen if you say no. You can turn it off."

– "The way these constantly connected games of subversion are shaping up, you'd have to be mad to hit the off switch."

ways," creative director Jonathan Morin reveals during an exclusive sit-down. "It was also becoming obvious that people in the streets were connected and that players were changing their relationships with what it means to be online all the time." This is the ideology powering Watch Dogs' second-screen support, a feature that will enable you to connect to Pearce's Big Brother-aping Chicago wherever you go... well, provided you're not hunkered down a well with nothing but the EDGE network accessible on your phone, that is.

While August's Gamescom demo focused on revealing more of Watch Dogs' systemic gameplay (more on that shortly), the studio chose June's E3 show to debut the game's second-screen functionality. During yet another headline-stealing presentation, we saw a developer

crust on this deliciously vigilant Chicago deep-dish pie.

Thatgamecompany's disquieting desert pilgrimage blurred the lines between single and multiplayer when another hooded figure silently dropped in on your trek. In Watch Dogs, these barriers will be similarly smeared, with Seamless Invasion mode giving other players the opportunity to silently mess with your hacking efforts by trying to complete tasks, such as covertly uploading a virus into your city.

"The big goal is to make sure that when you play an open world, the fun of it is the unpredictability of what can happen," says Morin. With other PS4 players sneakily infiltrating your play session, Pearce will not only have to look out for the Chicago PD, but also wannabe hackers on PSN. In a smart move, these multiplayer elements can be accessed through a

WELCOME INTERRUPTION

With the way these constantly connected games of subversion are shaping up, though, we think you'd be mad to hit the off switch. Random occurrences are the lifeblood of a good sandbox – something anyone who's been saved from pirates by a komodo dragon at the last second in Far Cry 3 will attest to. And the prospect of having to stay ever watchful against both AI and humans perfectly taps into the game's DNA.

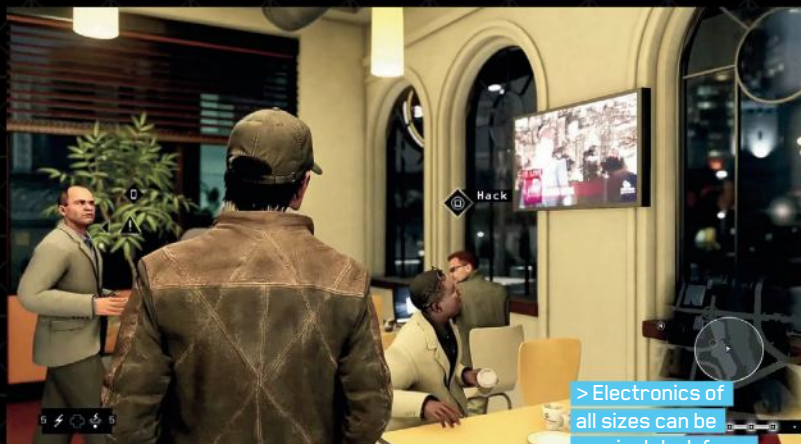
"A player on PS4 can wander around in a street and suddenly get challenged by someone, and get a perspective that's unique. That's what we're most interested about with the companion elements," states Morin. None of these interactions feel meaningless, either, as players will always be given objectives when hacking into someone else's game. "The way we designed it is so that players don't come in to do nothing; they always have some sort of motivation to subvert you."

In many ways, Sony's new console is the perfect platform to unlock Watch Dogs' constantly connected potential. Morin certainly isn't shy when it comes to expressing his



JONATHAN MORIN
CREATIVE DIRECTOR,
UBISOFT MONTREAL

WATCH DOGS PREVIEW



> Electronics of all sizes can be manipulated, from phones to TVs.



> T-Bone and Clara help Aiden connect to the city's network of shady hackers.



> Put a dent in the CPD's response time by messing with traffic lights. Sorry!

> Use the Watch Dogs app to take control of the city's helicopters.



> Cameras can act as a distraction to lure enemies from their patrol routes.



admiration for the social mindset behind PS4. "Sony understands really well what online can do to gaming today, more so than just the Share button – which I think is a really good idea. What matched for us with Sony when we started to show the game was that it was pitching its console like we are pitching our game: it's a pretty great fit."

As exciting as Watch Dogs' online potential is, it would mean very little if the underpinning experience couldn't reach those same lofty standards. Fortunately, as our exclusive first play on page 92 shows, this still looks like the open-world prospect to beat on PS4 (unless

GTA V gets a next-gen release). Built on a well-integrated blend of chaotic action and thoughtful stealth, this observant hound appears set to pull away from the rest of the sandbox pack by rooting its core mechanics in systemic gameplay.

To further clarify, 'systemic' is the buzzword Morin and his team can't help but fall back on when describing the unpredictable elements that influence every action in the game. Everything from the Assassin's Creed-influenced parkour, to car chase sections and shootouts, right through to sneaky infiltrations of the city's CtOS bases falls under the remit of a system that looks to make

each mission as excitingly freeform and light on pre-programmed scripting as possible.

"The strength of Watch Dogs from a gameplay standpoint is that over time you'll never experience the same thing [twice]," says Morin. "When you add in that Aiden can hack everything in his surroundings, you give the player an unprecedented level of control." These constantly fluctuating factors will also affect enemy AI, furthering the idea of an adaptable world built around Pearce's Rowdy Roddy Peeper sensibilities. "Say you're chasing someone in a car," explains Morin. "That character is able to make decisions based on everything in his surroundings to

> Your hero is surprisingly good with a firearm for a computer geek.

> Aiden is a lethal fighter, but the game encourages you to spare lives if you can.



_Character profiles



AIDEN PEARCE

THE HEROIC
TECH ARTIST

A COMPUTER HACKER EXTRAORDINAIRE WHO USES A PROGRAM KNOWN AS PROFILER TO ENTER CHICAGO'S CENTRAL OPERATING SYSTEM. HAS FAMILY ISSUES.



CLARA LILLE

THE UNDERGROUND
EXPERT

MORIN DESCRIBES CLARA AS A "TRAPDOOR SPIDER" AND A "VERY DANGEROUS ACTOR", BUT AIDEN CAN USE HIS TATTOOED ALLY'S MULTITUDE OF CONTACTS TO HIS ADVANTAGE.



JORDI CHIN

THE MAN ON
THE TRIGGER

A SHADY FIGURE WHO ENJOYS AN UNEASY ALLEGIANCE WITH PEARCE. DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES, CHIN IS USEFUL IF YOU NEED A PISTOL IN A JIFFY.



T-BONE GRADY

THE RECLUSIVE
REPAIR MAN

ALTHOUGH HE'S A GENIUS ENGINEER, T-BONE IS ALSO A COMPLETE LONER. DESPITE HELPING AIDEN WHEN YOU TURN TO HIM, HE'S NEVER BEST PLEASED TO SEE MR PEARCE.





create an unprecedented amount of possibilities [for] what can happen in a single situation."

Whether it's using your smartphone to obtain personal info on civilians or tampering with bollards during a high-speed chase, electronic tinkering informs every aspect of the game: "You can use traffic, citizens or infrastructures as tools." Hacking also provides you with a tremendous amount of freedom while exploring the Windy City, a point Morin is eager to stress. "We tend to give players action sequences, but there's a lot of other stuff you can do in our open world. You can profile citizens, or even look into certain places by remotely hacking their webcams."

ON THE CAM

After generations of in-game security cameras proving the scourge of stealthy escapades (poor Snake still has night terrors about those dastards on Shadow Moses), Watch Dogs is finally transforming that trend. "For the first time, cameras are your friend. You can hack them to attract enemies and start messing around with them to bring people to where you want," says Morin. "The first layer of freedom we have is giving the right pacing for you to think about everything using those

cameras. Then the second layer comes during free-roaming."

Like sending pigeons to the great Trafalgar Square in the sky during a Liberty City wander, straying off the beaten track in Watch Dogs will reveal hidden charms. "If you like to watch and understand things, you can tap into phone calls and text conversations," Morin reveals. "It gives you little peeks into the lives of people, and all of those can provide you with rewards, feed your curiosity or give you more understanding of the narrative."

this Christmas. "He's monitoring his family 24/7 without them knowing. When something backfires on them again, it explodes Pearce's idea of surveillance into something much grander. The story is very well anchored in everything that you do."

SMILEY VIRUS

Morin paints what would appear to be a dark picture of the narrative, but there will be some laughs smuggled in there, too. One of the key areas where Grand Theft Auto has always stayed ahead of its competition lies in

"After generations of in-game security cameras proving the scourge of stealth, Watch Dogs is finally transforming things."

Ah yes, Pearce's closely guarded plotline. While Morin isn't overly forthcoming with story specifics, he at least provides more background into the paranoid trenchcoat-lover's motivations. "Something backfired on his family and he's always felt responsible. So now he's obsessed with surveillance in order to protect them. He's overprotective – which you feel in the game, as the relationship with his family is pretty tense."

Although the rest of Aiden's clan may not have been shown off yet, it's clear GTA V's Michael isn't going to be the only put-upon PlayStation pappy

Rockstar's scathing, genuinely chuckle-worthy humour. From radio stations peddling designer underwear aimed at infants, to working for a garage owner obsessed with bull shark hormones, the series remains one of the only franchises in games that can properly do funny. Watch Dogs' creative director assures us his title will also provide laughs depending on how you play.

"There is a lot of humour in the game," he confirms. "We want to paint a picture that makes sense for a human being when they're watching an entire city unfold in front of them."

A friend in Creed

Ever since Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag's gameplay director Ashraf Ismail teased the pirate adventure could contain Watch Dogs Easter eggs, the internet has been rife with speculation. Are the two set in the same universe? Could CtOS be tied into the Animus? Is Aiden a Kenway descendant?

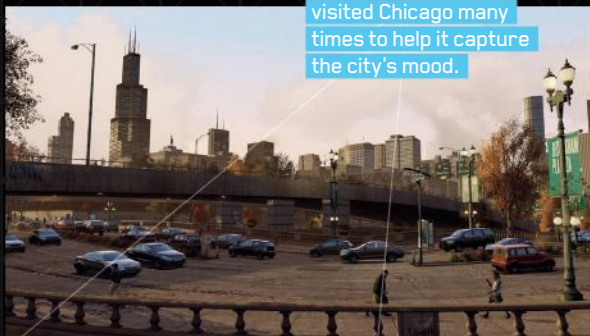
When we ask Morin, he gives little away on a possible connection, although he does enjoy all the guessing. "There's been a lot of fun on the web talking about how Watch Dogs could be in the Assassin's Creed future or contrary time, which to me is very funny. They're two distinctive universes, but two great universes. I can have a little bit of fun with that, but I definitely don't want to spoil whatever little things we might do in those areas."



WATCH DOGS



> Ubisoft Montreal visited Chicago many times to help it capture the city's mood.



> When Pearce has to go loud, you can conceal his identity by covering his face.



> Profiler makes Pearce's phone the most lethal handset in all of games.

Monitoring a citizen's privacy is a great way to show some of this humour, and you can expect a lot more." We've already had a glimpse of Aiden using a webcam to spy on a man with a sex doll, but the supporting players will also deliver on the funny. "T-Bone and Jordi are very serious about what they do, but their personality brings a lighter tone to situations, as well. It's important when you play a game that you're not always in that grey or dark area."

KITTED OUT

As our time with Morin winds down he also lets us in on how the progression system works. "You'll start with a certain toolkit where you can access quite a few things. There is a skilltree where you can unlock

your tools, with an entire chunk of it dedicated to hacking. Then there are also perks for shooting and driving, so you can advance all of the different playstyles that you want." Upgrades are also tied into a points system, as he explains: "Points are given and built into the main path during dedicated activities, but also in free-roaming, as well."

Hardwired into that shared philosophy with PlayStation 4, Watch Dogs is pushing the system in ways unlike any other next-gen title, and our hands-on (over the page) has assured us the core mechanics can match its ambitious online plans. If it can hack through the hype and realise its almighty potential in 2014, then this is one game you'll feel connected to like never before.



The CTOS is a service that provides a centralised view of all the data that is generated by the game. It is a service that is used by the game to provide a centralised view of all the data that is generated by the game. It is a service that is used by the game to provide a centralised view of all the data that is generated by the game.

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HANDS-ON

CHICAGO BEARS ALL

Revisiting the day we became first in the world to playtest PS4's hottest newcomer

My experience of Watch Dogs begins in a nondescript alley – a suitable setting for Aiden Pearce, who even with his mask off is constantly hiding his identity. The game plays with paranoia – cops, criminals and even civilians are looking for you, and you must fight, hide or hack your way free. The language and the feel of the hacking, lead story designer Kevin Shortt explains, was reviewed by Kaspersky Lab's digital security experts, but the process is abstracted to holding down the  button. As soon as a pedestrian with a smartphone walks past, I hit the button, hungry for illicit info nuggets. However, the information is blocked – I must drive to and 'capture' the local security hub to be able to use Pearce's data-grabbing powers here.

Driving certainly feels familiar. There's a plethora of different vehicles, each with their own handling and characteristics – although Ubisoft Reflections, creator of the Driver series, is still tweaking the car control. Vehicles give a decent impression of speed, and they're noticeably robust: clipping oncoming traffic leaves my vehicle compacted but still operational.

Crouching behind a wall, I consider my options. I could ram my stolen car into the armed guards at the gate, and then open fire on the others, but my sleuthing senses tell me I'd be better off opting for a less immediately fatal approach.

Remotely opening a garage door diverts the guards' attention. Activating the alarm of the car in the garage would certainly be distracting, but would also put the guards on alert. Instead I creep through a gap in the fence and climb on to the roof. By raising hackable barriers, I crouch, hide and sneak to a good vantage point. Then, switching from pistol to automatic rifle, I kill the entire security crew. In your *face*, subtlety.

The enemy AI, which successfully flanked and killed me at ground level when I screwed up my first attempt,

goes down fairly easily – the height advantage and slo-mo focus mode enabling me to pick them off from behind cover. Nonetheless, I take a few hits while mopping them up.

From there, it's a simple matter of recovering the code from a corpse, hacking a security camera through the window of a locked door, and using that camera's viewpoint to access the hub. If you can see it, goes the mantra, you can hack it... but that needn't be with your own eyes.

Compared to the industrial area of the first section, the next slice of the demo is in the heart of Chicago – Loop, Sears/Willis Tower and all. And I'm free to explore it at my leisure. Without a set mission, I follow a series

car to motorbike before running him to ground by a raised bridge. The Chicago River bridges can be raised and lowered to slow pursuit, along with other methods – during the chase I accidentally impale my own car on a set of pop-up bollards, to general hilarity. Having two human players in the world, both able to hack systems, adds a real sense of gleeful chaos to proceedings.

FRANK ROBBERY

When not being harassed by other player-controlled hackers, I'm able to explore the game's Vigilante system. As Pearce monitors the city's information data, potential crimes appear on his mini-map. In my demo, a

“I use a camera to access a security hub. If you can see it, goes the mantra, you can hack it... but that needn't be with your own eyes.”

of wall-mounted wireless repeaters to a home network and an ATM PIN number, testing out the game's climbing mechanics. It isn't surprising that initial speculation wondered if Watch Dogs used Assassin's Creed's Anvil engine, but they play quite differently. Pearce is fairly agile, but he isn't a ninja.

SECOND (PLAYER) CITY

However, before I can clean out my victim's account, a notification appears: my own phone is being hacked by another player. Disguised as a regular citizen, that player has to stay close to me without being detected. If the hack completes another timer begins, counting down to the corruption of my phone's operating system.

I then have to kill him, chasing first on foot and then by car. Driving past traffic lights I attempt to slow him up by changing them, then switch from

gun store hold-up was set up, although in the game crimes will take place semi-randomly.

The first time I arrive at the scene too late to save the shopkeeper, and the subsequent firefight spills out into the alleyway behind the store. Trying the same scene again, I shoot the robber before he can kill the owner, followed by his henchmen before they reach the door. In the full game, that would change the media's view of Pearce, as well as how people on the street react to him.

From this first play, it looks as if Watch Dogs is set to deliver on its huge open-world promise. While immediately familiar as a modern-day sandbox action-adventure with light RPG elements, the darker tone and the improvisational possibilities of the hacking system could be powerful plus points in the fight to be the first major new franchise of the next console generation.



> Aiden strikes his best Batman pose as he watches over the Windy City.

> Cars need some tinkering but already convey a tremendous sense of speed.



> Become the ultimate Peeping Tom with your prying tool.

BIG SHOT



Don't judge Delsin by his beanie, old smokie is one powerful dude.

INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

ETA FEB 2014 / PUB SONY / DEV SUCKER PUNCH

PS4 gives damn good superpowers. Building on its slickly-involving PS3 predecessors, Second Son makes its sandbox even more immersive. Based in Seattle, you control Delsin Rowe, a graffiti artist who can conjure plumes of smoke. With innovative DualShock 4 touchpad controls and advanced physics, this already looks to be a heroic treat.



November reign

Sony UK boss Fergal Gara
talks PS4's release date,
closest rival, and
exciting future plans

As far as the UK is concerned, a man named Fergal Gara is PlayStation 4. The former head of entertainment at ASDA took over as vice president of Sony's UK operations in 2011, masterminding the launch of PS Vita just five months into the job. Now his is the brain tasked with masterminding PS4's arrival on these shores – and we hooked up with him mere weeks ahead of release to discuss that very subject.

OPM: PlayStation 4 lands in Europe on 29 November. What was the thinking behind that particular date?

Fergal Gara: The target release window was always November, and we've hit that. It had been in line for years, not days [as some reported], so I'm delighted: it's an incredibly complex process to bring a piece of technology like this to market, so to do so on time is tremendous. That's what we live for as the local territory team, isn't it? We need to be in the market before Christmas, know the volumes we need, and have demand from consumers. All of those things are shaping up nicely.

OPM: There's a natural link between PS4 and Vita. Will we see them boxed together at some point in the future?

FG: There are no firm plans at this stage to put the two together in one box, but as a minimum there is clearly the opportunity for us to work »





If Gara's feeling any pressure as PS4's big day approaches, he doesn't show it.

THE OPM INTERVIEW

“THE 1995 PLAYSTATION WAS A BOX. GOING INTO 2014, 15, 16, 17 YOU’LL SEE PLAYSTATION 4 AS A BRAND AND A SET OF SERVICES.”

with retailers to put them together alongside each other as at least a great companion trade-up sale. With the pricing we’ve got around PS4 and the lower pricing around PS Vita, plus PlayStation Plus, you’ve got a lot of gaming content there across a couple of platforms, so it’s quite a compelling ecosystem. It’s giving you value, breadth and flexibility in your gameplay.

OPM: Tell us about the decision to let people trade-up from PS3 to PS4 on certain games like FIFA 14 for £10. Was that an independent publisher call, or a Sony decision?

FG: It’s largely in the hands of the game publisher to decide what is the premium for their consumer when it comes to trading-up from the PS3 version to the PS4 version.

OPM: Is PlayStation owning the indie market a key strategy?

FG: If you go right the way back to the console’s reveal at PlayStation Meeting in February, [PS4 creator] Mark Cerny clearly outlined the fact that he’d spent five years talking to developers big and small across the world, asking them what would be their ultimate platform to create for, what would make their lives easier, and unleash them as artists and creators. That feedback went right into the heart of PS4 and I’m delighted to say that we’re living those values. We’re giving them creative control, commercial support, and freedom, both creatively and commercially – and they seem to be loving it.

OPM: Why do you think they’ve selected PS4 as their format to make games on?

FG: I think part of it is trust, and that they believe us, and know our strategy isn’t something we decided over the last five weeks, but have been building to over five years. We genuinely want to be on their side, and embrace their talents and creative skills.



Gara is most looking forward to Killzone: Shadow Fall, which he calls “exemplary”.



Top Like most facets of PS4, Gara expects PSN to evolve over the coming years. **Left** The boss’s favourite next-gen game in action. **Right** Driveclub’s another Gara fave.

OPM: Does the mixed messaging sent out by your main competitor throughout this year strengthen PS4’s position?

FG: I can’t comment on the competition, but what I can say is our consistency of message and the core of the message itself has undeniably resonated with gamers. They have shown their respect for that message by rewarding us with phenomenally high unprecedented pre-orders. So we’ve got a lot right, regardless of anybody else.

OPM: Ultimately is every game you can buy on disc going to be available to download as well?

FG: Yes, I believe so. I think I’m right saying that.

NEED TO KNOW



FERGAL GARA
VICE PRESIDENT,
SONY UK

1989

AUNTIE BEEB

■ Joins the BBC as project manager before climbing the career ladder at EMI Records and supermarket chain ASDA, where he ascends to trading director.

2011

LITTLE BIG CONSOLE

■ Hired by Sony as vice president of the UK's gaming arm, and is on the streets with the queueing masses for PS Vita's midnight launch when it goes onsale in Feb 2012.

2013

A NEW ERA

■ Plays an integral role in delivering Sony's beautiful new baby as the chief UK spokesperson for all things PlayStation 4 – as well as announcing a well-received PS Vita price drop.

with update one. It's in the bag, it's not our primary focus but we see that as reasonably important to some people.

OPM: Video capture will be allowed, but not at launch. Do you have any idea of when that tech will be available for PS4 users?

FG: I'm not precisely sure, but the intention is to open it up because that's what's been asked for by gamers, and we don't see a reason strong enough not to. It'll be much more down to development timelines and fitting it into the schedule than any particular policy.

OPM: How flexible is the PS4 then, if you can set something like that to go remotely, according to consumer use?

FG: I'm possibly not the best person to ask about that. But our number one priority on the flexibility front is how easy PS4 is to develop for, how flexible it is to a developer. The feedback on that is excellent: it is easy, it is flexible and it imposes very little, if anything, in terms of glass ceilings on what they can do. The PC architecture allows flexibility on all levels really, so we're definitely in a better place. There were certain things about the PS3 architecture that meant we were in a little bit of a straitjacket, and not all the possibilities we wanted could be implemented as easily, or even at all. We've definitely learned

OPM: How about the other way around?

FG: Obviously, stuff that comes out digitally first and becomes quite a hit could then become a disc-based product. A digital release can be an incubator – a low risk testing ground – and we've seen loads of examples of that even on current-gen. I see that as a growing phenomenon, so it's exciting times, with more flexibility for publishers, more choice for gamers, and just a great platform coming to market. We're really excited.

OPM: Sony has talked about being able to stream everything, from games to films to TV, on PS4. Are we moving towards PlayStation as a service rather than a product?

FG: That's good way of putting it. We see PlayStation as a brand, not just as a box. 1995 PlayStation was a box. Going out to 2013 and probably more appropriately 2014, 15, 16, and 17, you'll see start to see PlayStation 4 as a brand and a set of services – a set of experiences. For the foreseeable future, PlayStation 4 will be the pinnacle of the tree in terms of the highest possible experiences, the most powerful service we can offer. But we can offer many many more. Look at the Gaikai acquisition, and PlayStation Vita TV capability. There are lots of pieces here that all point in that direction, really. Even non-Sony devices in time, too.

OPM: How will motion control evolve on PS4?

FG: With the PlayStation camera there's a lot of capabilities, some of which will be there from day one, some of which will be introduced along the line. So things like facial capture and voice login will be available from launch, while with something like gesture control, the capability is there but we won't put that live

and moved to make sure it's a more seamless and easy transition path for the various PS4 improvements that will come.

OPM: Will we see more features appear in the first year, then?

FG: It's a pipeline, and while I can't give dates there are plenty of things on the idea list and plenty of things in development so it's not a static console in terms of what it does. Neither was PS3, but I think you'll see that journey being more seamless and quicker on PS4.

OPM: So you could react quicker to an event such as Facebook taking over the world and gamers wanting to share their achievements on social media?

FG: That's a good parallel to draw – a great example of how the world has changed since PS3 was implemented, and how things can happen very fast and if you're not responsive you can become irrelevant very quickly. So yes, we've put ourselves in a much better place to respond to events like that. The most crucial thing in any of that ethos is that you can be flexible but also aware that you can hit a max in terms of power. So having plenty of headroom, having the most powerful machine possible at the outset means it's going to be longer until we run out of flexibility with regards to what's possible with PS4.

OPM: Remote Play and second-screen apps are on-trend at the moment. How do these fit into your thinking?

FG: The direction of travel is that we want to make more PlayStation experiences available on more devices, allowing us to interact with the gamer in more ways and through more touch points in their daily lives. That is our direction of travel. The top-end experience for the foreseeable future is undoubtedly the PlayStation 4. If you take PlayStation Vita TV or the Gaikai cloud gaming technology, there clearly is a strategy here to bring more PlayStation experiences to more people, in the ways they want it. We're more about a brand and an ecosystem than we are about one box. We're coming out with some specialist, dedicated and perhaps very cheap devices and we're also creating and investing technology that can enable other variants of the same concepts. Where will all the hits be in all that? I don't think you should expect all of these possibilities to be equally successful. That would be unusual. But the thing is

that we're responding to is changes in gaming behavior, and we want to remain relevant whatever the future brings. That's what we're investing in with PlayStation 4. ■



BIG SHOT

DRIVECLUB

ETA 29 NOV / PUB SONY / DEV EVOLUTION STUDIOS

.....



A gorgeous racer set to rival Gran Turismo as PlayStation's flagship driver. Hardwired into PS4's constantly connected ideology, Driveclub sees you taking to PSN to manage racing teams with friends. Every PS Plus subscriber can experience the game's incredible dashboard views and slick racing as it's part of the service's free Instant Game Collection.

.....

Those are some dang
good next-gen trees.
Mmmm... hi-res bark.

BIG SHOT



FIFA 14



ETA 29 Nov Pub EA Dev EA Canada

Champions in waiting

Moving the goalposts with FIFA 14 – EA's next-gen title favourite



Even on next-gen, Spurs are kings of stealing defeat from the jaws of victory.

Rest easy, footy-loving early PS4 adopters. EA Canada has no plans to hurl a slightly shinier port of PS3 FIFA at you like a deeply cynical Rory Delap long throw. As we sit down with executive producer David Rutter, he leaves us in no doubt about the differences between the current and next-gen versions of the colossal soccer series. “Put them side by side and play them one after the other, then you

realise how vastly different they are. It’s remarkable.”

Powered by EA Sports next-gen Ignite engine, FIFA 14 has a platform to rifle in a 35-yard screamer on PS4. And Rutter has no plans on missing. “PlayStation 4 gives us the ability to render with more fidelity. We’ve got roughly ten times as much animation in the next-gen version,” he confirms.

FIFA 14 is focusing its key improvements around three crucial gameplay pillars. At the

heart of everything is Precision Movement, a system that looks to revolutionise player actions through new locomotion mechanics. This is backed up by Pure Shot, which vastly improves striking thanks to a raft of new animations. Then there’s FIFA’s new Living Worlds, a next-gen exclusive feature aiming to capture the essence of storytelling in football like never before.

These are big summer additions, no doubt. Yet EA excels at talking an incredibly good game. So much



Expect a stats bump for Milan's El Shaarawy after a stellar season. Also expect Bendtner to forever remain an Arsenal player somehow.



so, it somehow manages to convince you the already brilliant FIFA 13 you've been happily playing this past year is actually a bit rubbish compared to this season's successor. In this case, though, the changes are readily apparent, and almost entirely for the better — especially when going hands-on with the PS4 version.

SHOT AND BOTHERED

Over the matches we play, the sensation of leathering a spherical pig's bladder with a pampered millionaire is gloriously crisp. Pure Shot recreates that instant connection with a ball you'd associate when watching real-life screamers. "You can take shots in places that weren't there in previous generations," says Rutter. "On next-gen, shooting has the full power of Ignite behind it, so you've got tonnes more animations

in there. We're really pleased with the synergy between the build-up to the shot and the connection actually happening."

Ball physics have been thoroughly revised. If you find yourself running on to a pass with a top striker or attacking midfielder on the edge of the opposition's box with a few free yards, you're likely to unleash a ferocious net-riper. Long-rangers now curve and dip in the air more realistically, while Knuckle and Balance shots also beat the D-day deadline. The former recreate Ronaldo's dipping free-kick technique, but Balance shots are more interesting. In the past, if you started to stumble while hitting the ball you could expect a row Z-botherer. Now, better players are able to squeeze away on-target efforts even if they're tumbling at the time.

While improvements in shooting provide a tactile evolution of what we've seen from FIFA in the past, Precision Movement aims for full-blown revolution. Producer Kantcho Doskov says "Locomotion is the lowest-level system in FIFA gameplay, meaning it affects everything else — you change the locomotion system, you have to rebalance dribbling, positioning, first touch. All the other systems hinge on player movement." And it really does work, with additions such as players now using the ball's momentum to allow it to run across them rather than having to take a first touch. Collisions are also far more realistic: take a light knock and your running stride may be interrupted, but sometimes you're still able to keep the ball and regain your footing, holding off your challenger in the process.



The mechanics behind FIFA 14's biggest new feature have been in development for two years and its inclusion certainly feels like a bigger game-changer than any of 13's debuting features. On a purely visual level, it's now much easier to identify certain players at a casual glance by their sprinting styles, with over 100 unique running animations. A low-gravity trickster such as Arjen Robben weaves beautifully on the wing, while Borussia Dortmund's mountainous centre half Mats Hummels shifts about with a pronounced, gangly grace.

THE 'I' IN TEAM

This increased sense of individuality with player movement is also being replicated when it comes to AI, especially on PS4. "The players on the pitch now operate as individuals

76-year-old 'boyhood' LA Galaxy fan Robbie Keane is still going strong... ish.



"LEATHERING A PIG'S BLADDER WITH A MILLIONAIRE IS NOW GLORIOUSLY CRISP."

that recognise what their teammates are all about, which is a big freeing moment for us," admits Rutter. "If you're talking about the individuality of say the difference between a Messi and a Ronaldo, then definitely we are starting to get much more deeply into creating those customised personalities on the pitch." Prepare for constant hair-fiddling and preening temper tantrums, then.

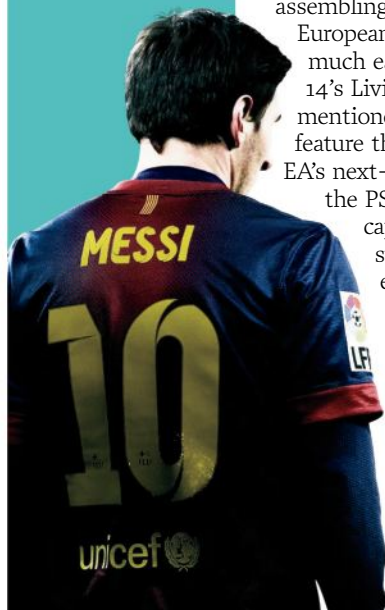
Thanks to PS4's super fast, future-proof GDDR5 memory, assembling a Bayern Munich-style European superpower is that much easier. Step forth, FIFA 14's Living Worlds. We mentioned it earlier, and it's this feature that could really make EA's next-gen star pull away from the PS3 game. It looks to capture that tingling, stomach-turning excitement of a big match with a completely reworked 3D crowd and a sense of narrative between games you've never seen before.

"One of the first things you'll notice is the new in-game camera angles, which allow us to bring the

sideline and the crowd into the experience much more," says Rutter. He also emphasises a desire to recreate over-arching stories throughout a season by implementing the storytelling you'd expect from Sky Sports on a Super Sunday... hopefully minus Jamie Redknapp's scrotum-strangling trousers: "If you think about TV coverage, there's always a story going into matches and then an outcome that carries into the story for the following week."

It's this sense of spinning yarns over a series of games that affects both crowd reactions and the behaviour of players that Rutter is so keen to forge on PS4. "That's what the future holds for us — the ability to create a series of fixtures with a true storyline of the players on the pitch that the players sat on the couch can really relate to," he explains.

It's easy to get fatigued by EA's constant rebranding of features. Yet FIFA 14 on PS4 is ambitious like a Scrooge McDuck-rich sheikh who'll stop at nothing to transform his side into winners. You could well be looking at the next-gen sports game. And with PES 2014 skipping the new machine this year, it's the only footy fix you're getting on PS4 anytime soon.





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PS4 EXCLUSIVE

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Massive PS4 playtest of the series' best game yet

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REVIEW

BATMAN ARKHAM ORIGINS

Exclusive verdict on Bruce's ass-kicking prequel

51

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THE DEVELOPERS' VIEW

PS4

The Developers' View

Five game creators talk the true
potential of Sony's next-gen console



With Sony promising its forthcoming machine will be the most developer-friendly console it's ever made, hopes are high. Easier creation means more innovation, more attention paid to harnessing PS4's true power, and – fingers crossed – no more substandard multiplatform ports. We posed a crucial half-dozen questions to five PlayStation developers to see what they're most excited about, what games they want to see, and if The Last Guardian will ever actually come out...



Our panel is united in agreement on PS4's dev-friendliness.

THE PANEL

Your distinguished guests are...



■ Ian Dallas

Founder, Giant Sparrow

Work includes The Unfinished Swan, The Misadventures Of PB Winterbottom, Sam & Max Season Two



■ Matt Gilgenbach

Co-founder, 24 Carat Games

Work includes Retro/Grade, Secret Agent Clank, Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters



■ Simon Barratt

Founder, Four Door Lemon

Work includes Table Football, Puzzler Collection, Premier Manager



■ Claire Hill-Whittall

Co-founder, Super Icon

Work includes Life Of Pixel, Pub Games, Mega Blast




■ Paul Croft

Co-founder, Mediatonic


Work includes Who's That Flying?, Monsters (Probably) Stole My Princess




What most interests you about the tech specs and architecture of the console?

 **Ian Dallas** As a mediocre programmer, I love that the PS4 is much easier to write software for. We can spend less time meticulously optimising our code and more time trying out lots of weird

gameplay experiments. That also means we can make better games with a smaller team, because we don't have to spend as much of our time spoon-feeding everything to the machine.

 **Matt Gilgenbach** The most interesting thing is that it's very similar to PC architecture. The main advantage of this is ease of development. Rather than having exotic custom hardware that takes years to master, developers will hit the ground running and have a good idea how to code for PS4. Having more power and knowing how to unlock it enables developers to make huge advances on the quality and scope of games.

 **Simon Barratt** The technical specifications released contained a lot of exciting news. The amount of raw computing power that's available, coupled with extremely fast RAM, allows games of all types to push the boundaries. People can sometimes be cynical when the power of hardware is being discussed, as though the gameplay always must suffer if there is even a slight hint of CPU or GPU power being discussed, but for creative developers having this power allows us to produce better results for less invested programmer time. This means time can be spent polishing the overall game experience. Another benefit for developers is that it seems architectures are starting to have some parity, at least in terms of the CPU – which for developers with a multiplatform approach is a massive benefit, as they don't need to worry about having specific platform specialists just to get the game to run at a suitable framerate!

 **Claire Hill-Whittall** Graphics, definitely. Some of the demos are eye-wateringly beautiful – used to great effect in Knack, where it looked like a playable animated movie with a lot of personality.

 **Paul Croft** It was great to see Sony adopt a more traditional architecture for the console in terms of chips and tech. Development-wise, this makes it easier for us to build games on PlayStation 4, as it aligns more closely with other platforms.

Q What other aspects of the PS4 package have promise?

ID Being able to play demos instantly is interesting. You're likely to get more people giving weird ideas a chance, which is good for those of us who like weird games.

SB The Share button is a great idea in my opinion – not only in terms of increasing the social spread of footage of your games, but also in possible challenges and asynchronous multiplayer options that it could spin out. I think Sony has done a great job in identifying a couple of the trends emerging over recent years and hopefully it can go on to deliver something that fits perfectly (with those) when PS4 launches! Remote Play looked great from the demonstration shown off on the announcement night. Having a high-powered fixed console device streaming content is the best way for this sort of play to work, and I imagine in the near future other second-screen opportunities will emerge from the same technology on PS4.



CH Well, from a purely selfish point of view we're hoping the Vita integration will boost Vita sales, which is good for us. Using a Vita or iOS device as a second screen is amazing, really – that's a real 'wow!' feature.

The redesigned Eye camera boasts two wide-angle lenses.

MG I think Sony has really stepped up the quality of the PlayStation Network platform. I'm excited that it'll now be easy for different gamer profiles to play a game – so my wife can get trophies when we play co-op, for example. Remote Play in the past has been problematic for some games because of latency, so I was excited to hear that Sony worked with Gaikai to reduce latency.

PC It's a real mixture of features. I think things such as Remote Play are a bit of a gimmick in their current form – it's difficult to see a practical use for them. I don't believe many people want to play long-form console games on a very small screen. I think some of the social features Sony is introducing look fantastic, though, and will help to add a new dimension to the games. It's taking some of the key things that have helped to drive the iOS and Facebook markets in terms of the way players can interact with each other and attempting to bring them to console games – which is a great thing, in my opinion.

Best of the rest

"I think connectivity is definitely part of the future of racing games. Social and connected is a very big push, and something a lot of developers have realised over the past few years. People want to share the experiences of their games."

Clive Moody

Senior executive producer,
Codemasters



Q What problems or limitations of current-gen development will be solved by PS4?

MG I think Sony is trying to address the numerous difficulties in PS3 development with the PlayStation 4 software. Besides designing it around familiar hardware, it sounds like Sony's providing a lot of interesting features as core components of the system software – rather than as something that requires weeks of work for developers to integrate on every project.

PC To me, the addition of Gaikai streaming is one of the most exciting additions to PS4. One of the biggest hurdles with console gaming at the moment is that you need to either visit a physical store to purchase a game, or wait many hours for it to download. Streaming the game from the cloud [means] you can start playing the instant you purchase it while the game itself downloads. With the collapse of many high street retailers such as Game and HMV, this can only be a good thing for PS4. It's a great addition.

SB Although from a geeky point of view targeting different architectures is really interesting, there is an actual development cost in terms of both time and money for developing for more than one platform. PS4 reduces that headache a lot for almost all games. We'll all still want to be pushing to extract the last 0.1% of power from the different devices and using slightly different approaches, but the Cell-based PS3 architecture differs greatly from the PS4 architecture.

ID Having 16x more memory available will make our audio designers' lives a lot easier. Even on a relatively simple game such as *The Unfinished Swan* we started obsessing over every kilobyte towards the end of the project. I'm sure our audio folks can find ways to fill up any amount of memory we give them, but having so much available on PS4 means we can say, 'Yes, you can do that' a lot more often when they ask us for something. Having really precise motion controls available on the PS4 controller [itself] will also be interesting. We could do a lot of the same gameplay with the Move controller, but I love that with PS4 you get two analogue sticks and motion controls at the same time. I think motion controls are really engaging for some activities – but as a player I'd rather be able to also use traditional gamepad controls where that makes sense, and the PS4 controller gives you the freedom to use both.



Best of the rest

"Because the PS4 system is very simple, it's like having a blank canvas. So for game creators, there are infinite possibilities to make whatever they want to. It's all about what a creator paints on to that blank canvas."

Kazunori Yamauchi
President,
Polyphony Digital

CH At the present time we haven't delved into PS3 development – but from experience with past systems like PS2 and PSP, we found them hard going to get things up and running in a reasonable timeframe. Vita was certainly a step in the right direction, with a great software development kit that bodes well for PS4. For a small studio such as ours, the time it takes to get games up and running is key – spending months on an engine is just out of the question these days. Please, Sony – follow Nintendo's lead and include Unity with all dev systems.

Q What entirely new gaming experiences do you hope we'll see, thanks to PS4's specific capabilities?

Best of the rest

"I love that Sony's going to invest in the connected experience. I think there's a lot of room for us to grow there, take advantage of that and create new experiences with the stats and the shared experiences. There's a huge opportunity there."

Dan Connors
CEO, Telltale Games

PC PS4 will provide us with richer, more cinematic gaming experiences. It's an upgrade rather than a revolution; I don't think we'll see new experiences thanks to the PS4's capabilities alone – rather it's the content itself that will help to define the platform. It was great to see Sony embracing games such as *The Witness* at the console's reveal event earlier in the year – this is a great strategy that will help differentiate PS4.

MG Sony made a big point early on that PS4 is its most open console. It's lowering the barrier for independent development. I'd love it if anyone with a computer and a PS4 could put out a game for it – like the iOS App Store. Triple-A games are mostly evolutionary because it's tough to take a risk with a huge budget, so I think the revolutionary experiences will come from indies. Making it as easy as possible for them to get on the system will yield amazing results, especially given the unique interfaces only PS4 offers with the DualShock 4, PlayStation 4 Eye and Move.

SB The computing power is going to be incredible as teams find new and interesting ways to exploit it. [At the PS Meeting] we saw the Havok Physics demo of a huge number of objects dropping into a world, and I believe that level of simulation power can be put to some really interesting gameplay uses. I'm sure there are teams experimenting with the different approaches for using the raw power right now. As I mentioned earlier, I think the social sharing functions could lead to interesting asynchronous play opportunities – not only are you sharing a

video of a gameplay segment, but you might also be able to challenge a friend to do better than you did in the same situation. It could be like a small time slice of a ghost-run challenge, in a way.

CH Definitely new ways of using the Eye to get players into the game – this is where I see most of the future innovation coming from.

Below PS4's second-screen possibilities have a lot of people excited. Us, too.

ID I think the combination of gamepad, motion controls, touchscreen and second-screen devices hooked up to the game is going to be nuts. There's a lot of very cool potential there. I just hope developers can exercise restraint and only use these new input methods where they add something significant. I worry 2014 might be the year of the touchpad-enhanced lockpicking mini-game...



Q Ultimately, what does PS4 say about the future of games?

PC The future of games is diverging — PlayStation 4 represents the ‘cinematic’ experience, something you sit down at home with and are blown away by the richness, graphics and sound. While PS4 will always have an audience of core gamers, as the overall gaming ecosystem expands rapidly in areas such as tablet and mobile, it will become increasingly niche. I believe the future of mass-market gaming is in games as a service rather than as products — where as a developer you have the ability to react quickly, updating and expanding your game based on consumer feedback.



Above Killzone: Shadow Fall will deliver you immersion like never before. Mmm, pretty war.

CH I think the whole cinematic experience will be a big focus with PS4. Games will be far more immersive, with believable-looking characters and cinematics. It looks like development is going to get even more expensive!

MG PS4 is really blurring the line of what a console is vs a PC, and I think this will continue moving forward. Consoles are now multifunction devices with complex operating systems and many features other than gaming. I don't expect to see word-processing software on PS4, but I think the idea of an entertainment box in the living room is a great one, regardless of whether it's called a console or a PC.

SB I think the huge positive reaction to the original PS4 announcement shows the core gaming market is alive and well, but also that Sony and other console manufacturers are acknowledging that the gaming market has developed since the last generation. New devices such as PS4 can still provide great experiences for users and hopefully provide a great marketplace and hardware platform for us to build great games for. It's certainly going to be an interesting year or two!

ID It says that convenience is really significant for people looking to be entertained. I think a lot of the success in mobile games isn't necessarily because of the quality of the games: it's because they're more convenient for people to find, buy and play. On the current PSN Store, once I've found a game I like it takes six clicks to download a demo. Add in all the time spent installing updates, patches and then installing the game to the hard drive and it starts to feel like a lot of work. With PS4 it sounds like Sony is acknowledging that making it convenient for people to play (and make!) games is important. I think we're going to see better games, and a better variety of games from a more diverse group of creators as a result.

Best of the rest

“Having a Share button is a profound change, as are the service-focused aspects. If we can assume these features are shipping in the box, we can exploit them, and find ways for our games to cross over onto other facets of people's lives.”

Alex Hutchinson

Creative director,
Ubisoft Montreal



Best of the rest

"Thinking about the future and constructing something appealing is our job as designers, and from that challenge we can take new strength. And that makes me horny."

Suda51

CEO, Grasshopper Manufacture

Q

What game are you most looking forward to?



Above Jonathan Blow's newbie The Witness is even more of a looker than Braid. Yep, it is possible.

SB I'm looking forward to playing The Witness - it looks beautiful! Also, I'm always excited about seeing Media Molecule's latest creations, because they're a great team who I respect a lot.

CH Well obviously we'd love to see one of our own titles on the machine, and hopefully that's just around the corner - but aside from that I'd love a really scary survival horror, with an emphasis on horror rather than action. Something new, though - definitely not Resident Evil!

MG It has to be The Last Guardian. I've been waiting for the game forever! Personally, I'd like to see a lot of new IPs on PS4 that take advantage of all of its interesting features.

ID I can't wait to play The Last Guardian! It looked amazing in 2009 and I can only assume it's gotten better in the many years since.



Above Could we see more oddball critter rampages in a next-generation Tokyo Jungle sequel?

PC I think Tokyo Jungle is one of the best games Sony has ever made - I would love to see a sequel!

Infection Scan 02

CONTAGIOUS

THE DIVISION

ETA WINTER 2014 / PUB UBISOFT / DEV UBISOFT MASSIVE



We'll give it to the late Tom Clancy: the military writer's words have spawned some amazing game worlds, none more so than this staggeringly ambitious shooter. Combining sleek cover blasting with sweeping MMO elements, The Division sees the US devastated by a contagion spread on Black Friday. This could be *the* online game to beat on PS4.

Bronson

<RAVEN>

FIGHT

INAPTY

806582

511 306

Megan

Bronson

Chris [AFK] [Tablet]

Decimated New York makes for a sensational backdrop.



Most games — particularly most modern FPS games — are determined to make you the hero. You're the one who puts the knife in the bad guy's eye, you're the one who defuses the bomb strapped to the little girl's face, you're the one who pushes the big red 'PRESS TO SAVE WORLD' button. Battlefield doesn't want to make these concessions: here you're part of the war machine, playing one part among many.

This has long been true of the series' multiplayer component, and is even more so this time around (which we'll come to). But DICE also wants to tell a more personal story in the campaign — a point executive producer Patrick Bach is keen to hammer home. "[Battlefield 3] was good but not good enough," he says. "We want to even out the score a bit, so we are doubling down on the single-player. We want to create this narrative about real people in the war. It's not about the war itself: it is about the people within the war. [We're] taking values from multiplayer, like player choice, and keeping the

react too much, because a lot of people that don't like the single-player love the multiplayer. Multiplayer in itself is worth the money and we don't want people to feel like you have to spend time in single-player if you don't want to. For us it is a combination of creating a full multiplayer experience and a full single-player experience." And that confidence extends to the genre as a whole — despite the sense that there's a growing feeling of fatigue towards gritty, contemporary shooters. "In the end, it doesn't matter if you have ten movies about approximately the same thing. If someone makes it really good, it is still intriguing. To me it's about

Army

How Battlefield 4 plans to be PS4's shooter salvation

narrative and the drama, and having these amazing moments where cool stuff happens."

Not an easy balance to strike, but the team's adamant that the single-player portion is integral to the Battlefield experience and that, despite the huge (and deserved) following that its online component has garnered, isn't going anywhere. "Even if the single-player in Battlefield 3 wasn't great, we still have a lot of people playing it," says Bach. "But to us it is important to not gut

creating an experience rather than trying to shirk away from that. Because there have been many modern military shooters, but not that many that have been great." And with developers still keen to ape the original Modern Warfare wherever possible, that's undoubtedly true.

Grand promises were made during development of the last game, though, and yet the single-player campaign was too short, too derivative and too buggy to even get near the



men

BATTLEFIELD 4

» 'classic' bracket. But where the game did deliver – and where we're more certain that this one will also succeed – is on the multiplayer front. Talk to a hardened Battlefield veteran about the online offering and they'll likely glaze over, mumbling like a man fresh from the trenches about the realities of war and the intricacies of driving a tank. And their dedication is well-earned because, without going to the joy-sapping extremes of Operation Flashpoint, the series encourages teamwork and paints a more realistic picture of combat than your average shooter.

It's a foundation that's being built upon here, but in terms of size and scope. Size-wise, a whopping 64 players can now take part in online battles, which has the knock on effect of more sprawling and variable maps. And the way you can play with these toyboxes has changed, thanks to DICE's 'levolution' concept. Says Bach: "It's both from a destructive standpoint where you can affect the world – set traps, bring buildings down, shoot stores, whatever you want – but also small things that will keep the game changing, like shooting out fire extinguishers to create a smoke cloud. We have metal detectors that beep when someone runs through them with a gun, so you can hear someone is close by. We have birds flying out of bushes when someone is sneaking through. So it's really small things up to the really big destructive events like buildings falling down. This [provides] very dramatic moments, and these small and big dynamic elements create this concept of the map actually changing as you play along. It will be a game changer."

Sadly in our time with the multiplayer we aren't able to do any large-scale demolition work, but we do get thrown into one of the most immersive and gripping online warzones we can remember. There are no tactical nukes being dropped, no quadrotor drones buzzing overhead, and no sociopaths teabagging fallen victims. Just soldiers scrabbling around a rapidly deforming city, tactically using cover, hijacking vehicles and, occasionally, crashing helicopters into the bay. It's the sense of scale and being a part of a much larger effort that is most striking: moving in impromptu fireteams in order to secure a



The Frostbite 3 engine makes DICE's effort the leader in the looks stakes.



location, or giving team-mates a lift across the vast map in order to provide backup at a stronghold under fire. The immersion is helped by the game's flawless visuals: tell us where we can find a better-looking shooter and we'll track it down and kiss it passionately on the mouth.

We're already convinced that Battlefield 4 will be the purists' choice for FPS multiplayer come release on PS4 launch day, and the only way to go when it comes to tactical and nuanced online play. But then that's long been the case, as have the doubts over DICE's ability to craft a compelling single-player game that stands the test of time. The team is certainly making the right noises, and what we've seen so far, combined with the focus on a more personal and emotive story, is promising. Whatever the end result, we do know that it'll likely be the genre leader in terms of graphical prowess – and as of now the game's troops look to have land, air and sea superiority over Call Of Duty and its canine companion. But in the FPS war things can change quicker than you can say 'levolution', even if not as quickly as it'll be rejected by your spellcheck.



Above Having gone hands-on with this map we can tell you that it's as immersive a multiplayer experience as FPS games have so far produced.

BATTLEFIELD 4



"WE'RE CONVINCED
BF4 WILL BE THE
PURISTS' CHOICE
FOR MULTIPLAYER."



Above You can't tell an emotional war story without big machine guns. Well you could, but it wouldn't be as fun.



A more personal single-player campaign is promised, so expect some key cast deaths.



Command & Conquer

Battlefield 4 multiplayer maestro Aleksander Grondal outlines DICE's plans for gaming's war on the future

Bigger doesn't always mean better. Think Andy Carroll, or that time your mate drew genitalia on your face when you passed out. So while it may not do the numbers of Activision's mega-franchise, DICE's take on multiplayer warfare is often thought

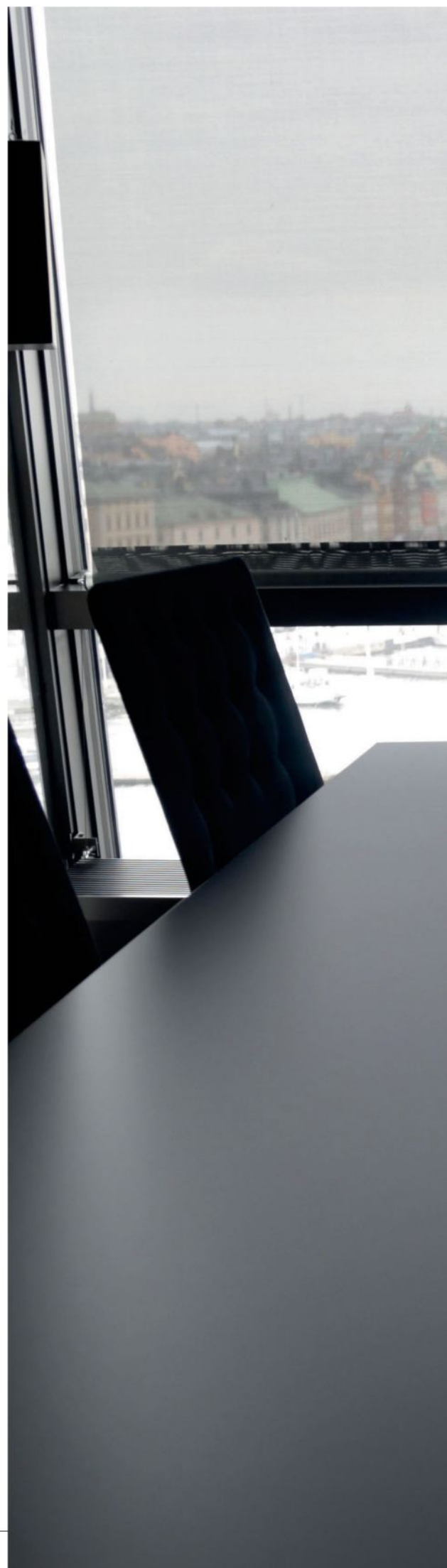
of as the critic's choice. One for the purist, it values teamwork and tactics over twitch shooting and teabagging. Such an approach has garnered it a justifiably large and passionate community – and a reputation to uphold as we move to next-generation gaming. So who better to explain how Battlefield 4 plans to win the online war than multiplayer producer Aleksander Grondal – and at DICE's Stockholm HQ, to boot...

OPM: Battlefield 4 will be released on both major Sony consoles. How, then, are you guys finding developing for PS4 compared to PS3?

Aleksander Grondal: For us, it's not that much of a difference really. We have a scaleable engine – it was already 'next-gen ready,' if you will, when we shipped Battlefield 3. We do parallel development for all platforms, so, for us, [moving on to PS4] is not really that big of a change.

OPM: Aside from looking better, what can you do with Battlefield on PS4 that wasn't possible on current-gen consoles?

AG: As we've said a few times already, 60fps and 64 players – [the latter of] which is the »





This is DICE's table of power. No word on whether it can launch air strikes.

THE OPM INTERVIEW

“ SHOULDN'T WE TELL YOU HOW TO PLAY THE GAME WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING IT, INSTEAD OF MAKING YOU PLAY THROUGH AN HOUR-LONG TUTORIAL? ”

» most important thing for many players. We're glad that console gamers can finally experience Battlefield on a grand scale and with a higher framerate, like PC players have done for some time. Bringing that experience to the consoles is perhaps the most important upgrade. Plus, the next-gen consoles come with other nice things that we can do – connected devices, like tablets, which we haven't been able to approach before.

OPM: This is your first foray on to PS4. How much of the hardware's power do you think you are utilising at the moment?

AG: That's a difficult question to answer! [Laughs.] The typical way it works with any machine is that there is a difference between the first generation of games [on a console] and the last generation of games, once you have learnt how to develop on the hardware a bit better. I'm not sure how that process relates to our game yet. I can't look into the crystal ball and predict anything. We are optimising a lot of things to get Battlefield 4 to run at 60fps, stuff like that.

OPM: The Share button on PS4 seems like something that would be very Battlefield-friendly. Is that functionality something you are excited about?

AG: Absolutely, that's a super cool thing for us. The ability to share has been on PCs for a few years and people have done a lot with it. So I am super excited about people sharing their Battlefield moments on PS4. It will create a much more interesting sphere of social interaction.

OPM: Killzone: Shadow Fall uses the touchpad to select weapons. Have you guys thought about using the touchpad for anything within the Battlefield world?

AG: We've experimented, but haven't exactly nailed how we want it to behave just yet.



The Stockholm-based studio is currently undergoing a refit. And it's already nice.



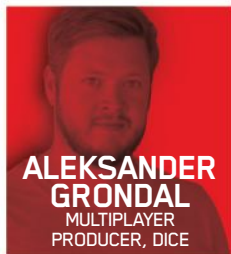
Top Our writer is not amused when Grondal mercilessly mocks his kill/death ratio. **Left** The class system allows you to personalise. **Right** Finger on that respawn button.

Obviously flicking to throw a grenade is an option. There's a bunch of things we're testing out – we just haven't settled on anything.

OPM: Battlefield has a huge multiplayer following and has been wildly successful online, and for very good reason. How much do you feel the need to evolve the elements that have made it so successful?

AG: We always need to keep evolving. We don't want to become stale, so we try to innovate in some areas every time we make a game. We picked a few this time, such as Levolution and bringing back the Commander mode. Becoming stale makes it less fun for us, and ultimately we want to make fun games. Every time we ship a game we

NEED TO KNOW

2001
HAIL TORE

■ Has a 'Customer Service' role on PC action-RPG *Anarchy Online: The Notum Wars* – whose lead artist, Tore Blystad, will later helm the *Hitman* series.

2006
DREAM STREET

■ Works as designer on *Dreamfall: The Longest Journey*, an Xbox/PC action-puzzler set in a parallel world in which you get to control four different characters.

2013
FOUR PLAY

■ After cutting his teeth on three *Battlefield* games – *Heroes*, *Play4Free* and *BF3* – is tasked with overseeing multiplayer on the mega-shooter's next instalment, *BF4*, across PS3 and PS4.

bit difficult so now there's a place where you can try out the vehicles by yourself. We call it the Test Range.

OPM: Have you ever considered a bots-only training mode, or a specific multiplayer tutorial?

AG: Absolutely. That's something we have thought about many times, but never quite got right. The thing about *Battlefield* is that you're not running in these isolated corridors but in very open environments – and trying to capture that in a very linear sense becomes very difficult. Shouldn't we try to tell you how to play the game while you're playing it, instead of making you play through an hour-long tutorial? That's the direction we took this time.

OPM: The series is resolutely set in a realistic world. Do you think that limits what you guys can do creatively, or do you enjoy going for that gritty, semi-authentic approach?

AG: I wouldn't say we are going for the realistic approach, but for the believable. It's always fun before realism – *always*. It should be fun first. We have so many ideas we want to do that we could continue for quite some time. Now the question is, do people still think it's interesting to play in these sorts of environments? So, I hope *Battlefield 4* will remain interesting to people in that sort of scenario.

OPM: The love people have for the multiplayer portion of *Battlefield* doesn't seem to be waning. That said, some feel that gritty, realistic, first-person shooters are beginning to look fatigued. Do you guys see it the same way?

become a bit sad, because of all the things we *didn't* get to do. There's always a huge list. It's important to us to develop new things while keeping true to the franchise.

OPM: What was top of the 'we didn't get to do this last time' list ahead of *Battlefield 4*?

AG: Competitive gaming was one of the things we didn't get to do properly [before]. And set-piece events, too. Caspian Border in *BF3* had the antenna collapsing, which was an early idea that finally evolved its way into the game. We didn't get to do water properly last time out – you were basically flying around on more or less a flat surface, with a bit of a bobbing animation – so that's one of the things we brought back [and improved].

OPM: Having a passionate community is great for the game, but do you feel it makes it difficult for someone to get involved for the first time without feeling completely out of their depth? Getting killed endlessly obviously isn't fun for anybody.

AG: *Battlefield* has a little bit of a learning curve, so what we've tried to do this time is to ease people into the game. We did some stupid things in *Battlefield 3* – the first weapon you got in the game was completely uncustomised and without accessories, which is the worst type of weapon you can play with.

So [it's vital to] give new players some weapons that work, some destructibility tools, some interesting things from the beginning. As for the vehicles, some people find them a



AG: Sure, I understand where you are coming from. I feel it myself at times. That's where we need to mix things up in terms of the single-player campaign, make it feel different. Fortunately, in a modern day setting there are so many things that we can be inspired by. Traditionally, games have focused on one place or era – the Middle East, for instance. So one thing we tried to do to remove that fatigue ahead of *Battlefield 4* was place the game in China. You get some new environments to play in, some new factors. It's important to make it feel fresh, [because] I completely agree with you – many people are feeling [the genre] has become a bit 'rinse, repeat'.

OPM: One term you've attached to *BF4* is 'emotional connection'. It's something that a lot of games in this genre have tried to do, not all that successfully. How are you guys approaching this challenge?

AG: In single-player we want you to have a connection to the characters themselves. That's what we've tried to emphasise. The story revolves around the characters, rather than the world or the events.

If you talk about emotions in multiplayer, it's more about creating situations where you have fun, where you want to come back to something. It's about giving you those positive experiences that you want to have when playing a multiplayer game and keeping it varied. If you feel the same thing over and over again, that positive feeling starts to go away. That's why variety is a big deal for us.

OPM: Digital distribution on next-gen seems a natural fit with *Battlefield*, for instance offering a single-player campaign or multiplayer component as separate entities. Is this model a consideration for the series down the line?

AG: Absolutely, we are open to changing how players want to get the copies – and how they want to experience them. For *Battlefield*, we want to sell them as the same thing; I don't think we are completely done with the bricks and mortar just yet. But as we move into the digital world I think we will have more interesting opportunities like this, and we will absolutely be involved. Actually, *Bad Company 2* was one of the first full digital games you could download on the PlayStation Store, and I think we will continue [delving] into this domain. I know EA is definitely investing heavily in going digital. ■

BIG SHOT



Infiltrating ruins
will demand sneaking
and awareness.

BIG SHOT

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

ETA 29 NOV / PUB UBISOFT / DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL

PS4 prepares to shiver your timbers with a gloriously tropical sandbox. Following Edward Kenway (grandpappy of Assassin's Creed III's Connor), Black Flag whisks you away to the Caribbean as your buccaneer attempts to execute stealthy hits during the golden age of piracy. Go whaling or explore Mayan ruins in a dizzying world.



LIVING IN THE SHADOWS

First it rebuilt Deus Ex.
Now Eidos Montreal is taking on
even bigger project: pulling Thief
out of the gloom and on to PS4.
Next-gen won't know
what hit it...



THIEF





Peeking out from between the burlap covers of a horse-drawn cart as it passes the city gates, Garrett the master thief – and icon of gaming's bygone era – announces his re-emergence to the world: "I've been away, but I couldn't tell you where." It's a lugubrious tone familiar now only to PC gamers of a certain age, and since Garrett's debut in *Thief: The Dark Project* in 1998, things have definitely changed. Polygon counts have increased by the thousand. Stealth games went mainstream, receded into the shadows, then went mainstream all over again with quicker pacing and wider toolsets. Light and shadow – Garrett's enemy and friend during navigation and stealth – are now fully dynamic, soft-edged and believable.

All those changes show in the genetic makeup of Eidos Montreal's *Thief*, as the next-gen engine's moonlight and lanterns direct your eye to scenes of carts laden with bodies, and men being locked in the stocks or lynched in filthy alleyways by their oppressors on the Baron's orders. Thick fog hangs in the air between Victorian terraces and older Gothic structures with a tangibility that wouldn't be possible on PS3. Lightning makes the rain glow as it falls. There's a lavish sheen to the city, iniquitous as it



Above Semi-scripted melee combat is the most jarring of Eidos Montreal's additions.

is, that screams 'big budget'. There's a hungry market for sneak-'em-ups as we enter next-gen, and publisher Square Enix knows it.

HIP TO BE SQUARE

Looking Glass Studios followed its series' debut two years later with *Thief II: The Metal Age*. In 2004, Ion Storm released *Thief: Deadly Shadows* on PC and Xbox, Garrett's first console foray. Then: nothing. Almost ten years of darkness, rumours and whispers. But while Garrett was away (let's pretend he's been training other ne'er-do-wells with lasers and catsuits, like Catherine Zeta-Jones in *Entrapment*) people kept talking about



True story: Eidos Montreal's revision of Garrett is a mashup of raccoons, The Crow and Joker.



The City has a handy knack for highlighting enticing secrets within its Hammer horror walls.

Revolution. "We wanted to keep the main pillars of what was a Thief game," explains game director Nicolas Cantin. "It was really important to us. We had carte blanche – we were able to do almost anything we wanted to do – but at some point we constrained ourselves within that Thief experience."

The main pillars, Cantin says, are playing as a true thief, rather than an action hero in a leather facemask – "The fantasy of being a thief was really important. It was one of the first things I wanted to keep" – and using darkness as

original formula that simply wouldn't play well today. It's time to question the raison d'être of the reboot.

Thief is, and always was, a game about avoiding combat. The streets are teeming with guards that you're not supposed to kill. Somewhere in the steampunk-Gothic-industrial sprawl is a building full of loot that you want, people offering tantalising snatches of conversation that colour the world (an invariably darker shade), hidden pathways and one particular object valuable enough to justify the whole operation. Sticking to the shadows and moving silently is essential. At the heart of the experience, Cantin tells us, is a simple gameplay loop: infiltrate, loot, escape.

CLOAK AND DAGGER

In the demo we're shown, the streets are also rife with signs of pestilence – a gigantic wealth gap, a tyrannical ruler enjoying an opulent lifestyle at his people's expense. A very industrial-era theme, and one suited to a game about stealing from the rich. "I don't think we deliberately try to say 'this is our message,'" says lead level designer Daniel Windfeld Schmidt. But in the wake of zombie games belying an apocalypse on the collective mind, and a number of

"STICKING SILENTLY TO THE SHADOWS IS ESSENTIAL."

him. Looking Glass' Thief games have in recent times been held up as under-appreciated masterpieces of stealth action and storytelling, champions of values we don't see enough today – player freedom, the kind of atmosphere that sticks to you hours, even years, after you play it. And now the franchise is being rebooted by Eidos Montreal, the mastermind behind fellow cult icon Deus Ex's well-received reimagining, Human

your primary weapon: "The contrast plays a big part in the art direction. When we talk about Thief, we talk about light and shadow." Well, that sounds like Thief, but will it feel recognisable? The stakes are once again high. Forumites are once again sharpening their sticks. Should we be excited, then, or nervous? It's time to look past the name and ask how deep Thief dives into its ancestry, and where the dead wood lies in the



THIEVES IN TIME

The series' instalments to date...



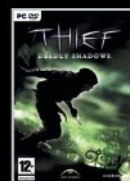
THIEF THE DARK PROJECT
DEV LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS
PLATFORM PC YEAR 1998

A certain Ken Levine had a big hand in writing and designing Thief's debut. Its huge levels, inventive use of sound and raw tension are remembered fondly. Its dinos and zombies are not.



THIEF II THE METAL AGE
DEV LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS
PLATFORM PC YEAR 2000

Looking Glass returned to Thief with sharper AI and a story full of conspiracy and intrigue. The graphics were stuck in '98, but all other elements felt refined.



THIEF DEADLY SHADOWS
DEV ION STORM
PLATFORM PC, XBOX YEAR 2004

After Looking Glass disbanded, Deus Ex studio Ion Storm took the reins and poured on the fancy lighting effects in this solid threequel, adding third-person gameplay to the formula.

THIEF



You can fire that arrow, but the result will let you know it's a terrible idea.

games featuring oppressive leaders, it's hard to ignore this recurring theme post-2008 banking crisis and post-Occupy Wall Street. Men clad in filthy rags beg guards to spare their lives before choking in the noose. Garrett, ever the observer, remains entirely impassive as he's pulled through a settlement known only as The City by cart. Already we're

departing to other areas for set missions: open-world this is not, and nor should it be. Better to maintain the staggering detail in a few memorable locales. It's part Dickensian London, part Dunwall. It's also in part the old City the Keepers – the ancient sect that trained young Garrett many years ago – built before even the first game's events. Exploring

"I NEVER SEE A SWORD. MAYBE THERE ISN'T ONE."

introduced to the main characters here – the thief, and his stomping ground.

The latter is an especially exciting prospect. It's absolutely incandescent with detail and atmosphere, dynamic with NPCs and their conversations, candle light flickering across tessellated brickwork, wide vertical and horizontal boundaries for exploration, and a skyline to stop even a grizzled robber in his tracks. You'll spend some time in a central hub, where you'll get to upgrade gear and hawk stolen goods before

these streets is sure to be one of PS4's absolute highlights.

At the apex of modern stealth gaming, Dishonored and Hitman: Absolution let you do the whole 'angel of death' thing if you accidentally pop a shoulder out from behind a crate and alert a nearby rent-a-goat, but in Thief games past and present, you're not equipped to lay whole postcodes to waste. Maybe you'll come out on top of one swordfight, but a second is suicide. In more than 30 minutes of gameplay at Eidos Montreal

HQ, we never even see Garrett's sword. Maybe he doesn't even carry one.

Instead, the master thief relies on his trusty bow, an instrument of distraction as well as destruction. In one inspired sequence, we watch Garrett track an architect named Eastwick to an underground cathouse, the House Of Blossoms, licking his lips as he eyes Eastwick's gold medallion. He fires an arrow towards a bottle, creating a sound that shepherds one guard into an adjoining room. Then he sneaks behind another to whack him around the head with another old stalwart, his Blackjack. That brutal leather cosh filled with lead shot was the easiest way to knock enemies unconscious before, and its reassuring weight makes short work of his adversary's cranium here.

With the first guard still investigating the noise next door, Garrett switches back to his bow and launches an arrow at a lever that drops an iron gate, trapping the remaining foe behind it. Of course, he could have just busted through the room like it was Call Of Duty with arrows – those things go through a skull like tracing paper – but the game incentivises the quieter path with equipment and level layout alike (not to mention the threat of death).

The glimpse of other tools at your disposal is encouraging, too. Standard arrows are accompanied by speciality projectiles that extinguish flames using dry ice (a faintly more plausible version of the previous games' water arrows) or expel smoke for you to disappear into. Then there's the Claw. Firstly, yes we did say that in the voice of Toy Story's aliens. Secondly, it's your prototypical



Above This building is on fire. Thankfully the House Of Blossoms – a lair of debauchery just asking for a pilfering – is not.

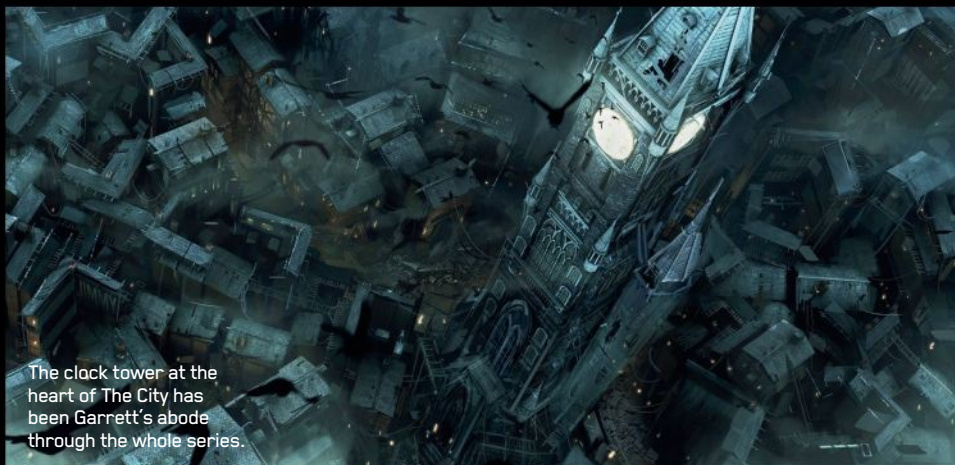


THE ART OF STEALTH

The concepts being brought to life



Above The dev had real-life versions of this costume made up to find out how it reacted to the light.



The clock tower at the heart of The City has been Garrett's abode through the whole series.



Above The new assault rifle should make short work of that shield... just kidding.



Next-gen rendering and lighting make Thief's streets thick with atmosphere. And actual fog.



Above Listen in on NPCs' conversations and your nosiness is rewarded with crucial information about the level.

BOW SELECTOR

Building Garrett's gear

The things developers do in the name of authenticity. Eidos Montreal really wanted to get Garrett's signature longbow right, and decided the best means to that end was to build a 1:1 scale retractable titanium model of the thing. Local blacksmiths Mathieu Collette and Dan Nyborg poured a staggering 600 man-hours into the project, working with \$12,000 of raw materials.

Reassuringly, considering the amount of work involved, that mighty mass of time fed directly back into the game's development. Collette and Nyborg made several modifications to Eidos Montreal's concept art, and the team decided to make changes to Garrett's in-game weapon accordingly.



Above Even having substituted steel for titanium, the real version of Garrett's bow is a monstrous weight to sneak around with.



Above The full scale of your arsenal has yet to be revealed, but you can count on smoke, water and broadhead arrows as dead certs.

grappling hook thingy that allows for greater vertical movement, giving you access to the upper nooks and crannies of The City's towering tenements and Medieval structures.

Thief's toolset is geared towards manipulating your environment, not killing. This is about being the cat among the mice, and in that respect the blueprint of this reboot's source material is unmistakably present. That means weapons like noisemakers — specifically called blunt arrows — are back to provide a fireworks-like distraction in order for you to sneak past enemies.

GLASS ACT

We might as well get the changes out of the way now so certain people can go and set fire to the internet in protest (not you, discerning reader, but we're not sure about the guy reading over your shoulder). This isn't a sequel made by Looking Glass, and as such it's not going to scratch you behind your ear like the now-defunct studio used to, or transport you back to the days of after-school playthroughs, milk and cookies, and your mum asking you to turn it down a little bit from the kitchen. Inevitably, there are some significant changes in Eidos Montreal's game that transform the experience and — for better or worse — modernise it.

Get ready to be blasted by the new-cannon: Focus mode is Garrett's augmented-vision ability. Here, Eidos Montreal feeds Deus Ex: Human Revolution's Smart Vision through Victorian machinery and deftly crafts a faintly plausible in-canon ability out of it. Garrett lost an eye during Thief: The Dark Project and had it replaced with a mechanical orb fashioned by the Keepers. Previously, that eye could zoom in on faraway scenes and be thrown under doors to check out the next room



(while, er, choking back vomit, obviously). In Thief's PS4 incarnation, said mechanical eye teams up with Garrett's nefarious instinct to highlight loot, secrets and guards in ghostly blue against a grey fog when you enter Focus mode. It also slows time, enabling you to pick pockets or strip opulent ladies of their jewellery before they realise they suddenly got lighter.

In the House Of Blossoms, Garrett uses Focus mode to steal from right under people's noses. He lurches from shadow to shadow using the new Dash ability (the natural evolution of leaning in earlier games) and creeps up to opium-muddled patrons on the soft carpeted floor, surrounded by once-luxurious décor. Entering Focus mode, he isolates loot items among the brothel's bric-a-brac, and even rips the earrings and necklace off a woman without her noticing, using a UI prompt. Focus is a



Above This magically glowing medallion strongly hints at a return to Thief's supernatural roots.



Garrett's Blackjack administers massive cranial injury with minimal noise.

finite resource to be used economically when you're in a bind, however, not a constant aid. What you're currently thinking is right, of course: modes like this do crop up everywhere, but in this environment it doesn't feel shoehorned. At all. Instead, it's an extension of the glimmer that used to dance over the low-poly loot items in Thief games past, and it makes sense in a way that John Marston's time-manipulating powers never did.

"THIS IS ABOUT BEING THE CAT AMONG THE MICE."

Harder to explain is the attack points system within Focus mode. These work like The Walking Dead episodes' QTEs, presenting icons over an enemy's body parts to move the aim on to and subsequently unleash a third-person hand-to-hand sequence. It's designed to convey combat in a cinematic way, and the two-on-one scrap we saw it used in outside the House Of Blossoms was quite a spectacle. With the press of a few buttons, Garrett had pushed one guard into another, chucked one down a steep drop to his death and leapt to safety. It was high-adrenaline action, but it wasn't the stuff of Looking Glass' immersive

sims that you might expect to be attached to the Thief name.

Maybe the most radical of Eidos Montreal's new ideas is Thief's viewpoint. Most of the time you see The City through Garrett's eyes, your periphery obscured by a dark, filmy filter that should annoy but actually heightens your senses. When you brush up against a wall, Garrett puts a gloved hand out against it. When you lean out from behind a barrel (where would we be

without crates and barrels?) a steadying mitt emerges then, too. It doesn't sound much, but this simple trick anchors your character to the surroundings — it's just that much easier to believe you're really there. There are moments however, when your view switches to third-person: dropping on to an enemy to perform a takedown à la Deus Ex: Human Revolution is one.

CLAWING AWAY

Entering a platforming sequence is another. Above the aforementioned den of sin is a crumbling library once belonging to the Keepers. As you clamber

around looking for an entry, rotten beams give way and you're plunged into a brief climbing section in third-person, using the Claw. Frankly, it's an immersion-breaker that sits oddly with the ebb and flow of Thief's other elements. It's possible to convey agility in first-person — and Eidos Montreal pulls it off confidently at times during high-speed free-running sequences. It's all the more odd, then, that the studio feels the need to hedge its bets with these jarring platformer moments. You might have said the same of any of Deus Ex's dalliances with current gaming tropes, of course, and it was hard to stay mad at an experience that boasted such scope for including a few features that might encourage people who didn't already have the T-shirt to play the game. It'll be even harder to frown in Thief's direction because of the charisma its setting oozes. And, of course, because it stands a strong chance of actually doing stealth well.

DARK ARTS

Which is tricky, as anyone familiar with Assassin's Creed III's glitchy acknowledgement of your presence will tell you. The Eidos Montreal approach comes down to clever — but readable — AI, with a consistent set of rules (such as always being invisible while leaning) and no easy way out by resorting to all-out combat. "A big part of the secret



SUITED AND REBOOTED

The best and worst of gaming necromancy




XCOM ENEMY UNKNOWN

DEV FIRAXIS
LAST GAME XCOM: ENFORCER
(2001)

REBOOT 2012

Civilization developer Firaxis


nailed both the macro and micro-management aspects of waging a war against Earth's extraterrestrial invaders, retaining the attachment you get to your troops and opting not to mess with the strictly turn-based combat. On top of that, it made a staunchly PC-centric title work perfectly on PS3. In a word, bravo. 



ALONE IN THE DARK INFERNO

DEV EDEN GAMES
LAST GAME ALONE IN THE
DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE
(2001)

REBOOT 2008

The decision to bring back a tepid survival-horror series was a brave one that garnered some interest. Eden Games' decision to re-imagine it as a buggy, torturous affair was harder to stand by. No one who played it will forget having to traipse through black gunk before clipping through the level any time soon, though. 




SYNDICATE

DEV STARBREEZE STUDIOS
LAST GAME SYNDICATE WARS
(1996)

REBOOT 2012

It didn't play terribly, but Starbreeze's first-person

shooter had as much to do with the original isometric sci-fi games as its Skrillex soundtrack had to do with Gregorian chants. We name and shame it here not because it's a bad game per se, but because it simply didn't need to tack an ancient franchise's name on to its functional shooter package. Developers: take note. 




TOMB RAIDER

DEV CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
LAST GAME TOMB RAIDER:
UNDERWORLD (2008)

REBOOT 2013

Lara was getting to be a rather spiky adventuring companion

prior to this year's welcome (although sadly PS3-only) re-emergence. Gone are the continual quips and nonchalant animal slaughter, replaced instead by a younger, far more vulnerable and human incarnation of Ms Croft who enjoys a climbing puzzle or a lever to pull as much as she does dipping behind cover. 

is to give a lot of feedback," says Windfeld Schmidt. "It's also about the nuances, body language, walk cycles." Alerting a guard isn't a binary business, either: "If you run into the light then back into the shadows, they're gonna know somebody's here and they're gonna search for you. That's the difference [to] just causing a disturbance. They make [natural] assumptions."

Stealth games fail when you don't know why you just got killed, or how you were detected. Thief's light meter, a series-long staple, will tell you how visible you are via a glowing bulb at the bottom left of the screen. If you're making a lot of noise, the AI will hear it and investigate. If you're making a lot of noise and are visible, they'll go straight into attack mode. There's no Metal Gear alert sound or cooldown timer — your senses will tell you if the guards are shouting after you, or if their body language looks aggressive. And, Windfeld Schmidt promises, Thief won't fall into the old conceit of guards stepping over their dead friends just because their alert state timed out. They won't forget they saw you, or that you killed the guy standing next to them a few minutes ago.

Garrett demonstrates this perfectly on his way to the House Of Blossoms, killing no one before entry. He's spotted



FUTURE PROOF

How Thief really shows off PS4's visuals

Thief was the first game we saw running on next-gen hardware – at least, the first game the dev admitted was running on it. And it didn't take many frames to get us all wobbly with excitement.

Surfaces are dynamically tessellated, which is a fancy way of saying they're full of high-detail bumps, cracks and soft

edges. This is only possible on DirectX 11 graphics cards on PC, and technical art director Jean-Normand Bucci was right when he assured us it'd make PS4 – more evidence that Sony's new console is much closer to a PC's architecture than PS3.

Particle effects are another improvement. In the same demo, Bucci

showed us an entire building on fire, hundreds of embers dancing through real-time smoke and collapsing scenery with realistic physical properties, while outdoors a violent storm rages. The real-time soft shadows across the world will likely be the touch you notice most, though.

As with 2004's *Deadly Shadows*, some takedowns prompt a shift to a third-person view.

once, but escapes in a *Mirror's Edge*-esque free-running sequence full of knee slides, vaults and stunning rooftop scenery. Even after picking numerous locks and pinching antiques from the brothel's private chambers, he remains invisible. He moves silently on the beams above each room. He peeks through cracks in the wall, overhears one girl

"THERE'S A DEFINITE LIKENESS TO DISHONORED."

telling another not to mix too much opium into the air supply in a room full of levers and pistons – signposts that this is a puzzle room.

When he finally grabs Eastwick's medallion in a grisette's chamber, the architect none the wiser, Garrett discovers there are secret symbols on the walls, visible only in Focus mode, that correspond with markings on the gold disc. There's obviously some secret passageway to open, more hidden treasure deeper under the library, but he doesn't get chance to find it. Eastwick hollers out to the doped crowd that he's been robbed, but the 'escape' phase is already underway. Throwing caution to

the wind, Garrett pulls a few switches and levers, toxifying the air with narcotics. Holding his breath, he scurries between the dumbfounded and the unconscious, back out into the night.

There are other outcomes to this mission, the developer tells us. If Eastwick had met Garrett's Blackjack before raising the alarm, there'd be no need for such a messy departure. You might have, in a fit of boldness, decided to walk right through the main library door where Eastwick entered, and the

game would have let you. It would have been a terrible idea, but you'd have been able to do it nonetheless. Thief has all the signs of being a long-form experience that rewards multiple playthroughs, an aspect the team is mindful of, Windfeld Schmidt explains. "Some players want to sit and watch, see opportunities," he says. "The old Thief games were very slow-paced and you had to pay a lot of attention to what was going on around you. One of the challenges for us was to make sure that you understand the options that you have. I think players will have a lot of fun figuring those ways out, and the toolset that Garrett has allows for more opportunities."

This is the very last sight that many of *The City's* guards will ever lay eyes on. What a pity.



Above Gothic and industrial architecture meet head-on in Garrett's home town, *The City*.

BIG SHOT

CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

ETA 29 NOV / **PUB** ACTIVISION / **DEV** INFINITY WARD



The most successful shooter in the world takes aim for PS4 as it looks to reinvigorate gaming's most obsessively played online mode. Ghosts introduces squad-building and destructible environments into the peerlessly popular online mode. Oh, and it also features the most kickass Alsatian companion in all of games in a near future single-player.





Ghosts is set in a world where the US is no longer a superpower.

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RETROSTATION

144 SHADOW OF
THE COLOSSUS

Standing on the shoulders of giants...
and then slaying them all, in PS2's
greatest ever adventure.

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RESIDENT EVIL 2

PlayStation™

INFO

PUB VIRGIN
DEV CAPCOM
RELEASED 1998, PS1
GET IT NOW PSN, £7.99

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 It's the game that made zombies cool to love/shoot.
- 2 Canny resource management is utterly vital.
- 3 You puzzle just as hard as you fight. Puzzle harder!

Leon S. Kennedy and Claire Redfield, demonstrating the absolute apex of apocalyptic fashion.

Post-mortem

The series has gone off a cliff in recent years, but in its PS1 and PS2 days 'Resi' was the watchword for shivers-down-the-spine survival horror. We peer over the flaming fuel truck of time and look back at a true legend of lights-off gaming



Resident Evil 2

Why exactly has this storied survival horror managed to ape its own subject matter and exist so far beyond its natural life? Let's spare the gratuitous verbiage concerning the evils of modern game design and how Resident Evil 2 is a beacon of all that's lost, and boil this PlayStation 1 hero down to two distinct molecules of importance. One: it has atmosphere. A clinging, portentous atmosphere still capable of coaxing your brain into initiating its T-shirt-soddening sequence at the chime of the menu screen bell. Two: it's brutally, hilariously unfair.

Resident Evil 2's scariest moment isn't a moment. It's every single time you move between one fixed camera angle and another, because there's every possibility that a zombie is waiting just out of view to cruelly gnaw your hapless face off when you do find the courage to move. The only way to avoid it is to shoot into the unknown everywhere you go, but there aren't enough bullets as it is. The injustice!

But it's exactly this restrictive, clumsy design that makes Resi 2 such an adrenaline rush. In real life, after all, you won't see them coming. Allow

a microsecond's lapse from your sleep-deprived, starving, traumatised nervous system and your succulent limbs are forfeit; cloth-wrapped Lunchables for the legions of pursuing undead. In videogames, of course, you see them coming a mile off. If you don't, the camera wrestles itself out of your control to point them out, and from that point you have anywhere between five and 30 seconds to put your mortality-agnostic assailants out of their misery as they traipse resignedly down your line of sight.

There's absolutely none of this contrived gunplay in Resi 2. Yes, the zombs are every bit as willing to line up their skulls with your pistola, but they arrive on-screen just feet away from you, in ever-closing semi-circles of incomprehensible low-poly terror. Sometimes you turn a corner and one just starts eating you.

Designers know better than to screw you over like that nowadays, and you know they know. You can second-guess

ZOMBS ARRIVE FEET AWAY, IN EVER-CLOSING SEMI-CIRCLES OF LOW-POLY TERROR.

every beat of the action – but you couldn't in 1998. That makes both the survival and horror of Resi 2 weigh heavy and constantly on your mind even today. Coupled with its inimitable tone and (at the time) unrivalled cinematic production values, that permanently tense gameplay gives the title its unnatural lifespan.

MIKAMI MEMORIES

If we could put our finger on *exactly* what made it so atmospheric, we'd make our own really atmospheric game and use the proceeds to 'persuade' director Shinji Mikami to return to his Resi roots. Make no mistake, though: it's more than soppy nostalgia. It's the masterfully executed feeling of being late on the scene, alienated and desperate to piece together what in brain-munching hell just happened. It's the magic that happens when the minor-key cop show piano licks and pre-rendered gas stations combine. It's the lugubrious mise-en-scène drawn in the still backgrounds. The art that outlives the 16-bit paintbrush.

Why Raccoon City PD's staffers spent their days hiding jewels and rearranging bookcases instead of solving crimes we'll never know, but Resi 2's considerable puzzling element stamps on the brakes and lets you soak in that atmosphere. And two separate campaigns? Each with their own A and B storylines depending on which you completed first? That's a big sell when you're 14 and working all the paper rounds in the postcode to feed your fledgling gaming habit. Leon and Claire: we miss you like you'll never know.



■ Never enough room or bullets – a winning formula. ■ Get munched and you gain an agonising limp.

■ The most famous (non-canine) corridor in gaming?

"I can see my house from here! I can also stab you to death via the medium of sword to the head and feel bad about it forever."



PlayStation 2



INFO

PUB SONY
DEV TEAM ICO
RELEASED 2005, PS2
GET IT NOW PSN,
 £13.99

NEED TO KNOW


- 1 It's one of only two games Team Ico has ever released.
- 2 The HD remake radically improves the framerate.
- 3 There were originally going to be 48 Colossi.

The iron giants

A spellbinding PlayStation 2 masterpiece from Ico creator Fumito Ueda that involved slaying huge monsters, sucking up ghostly sights and riding the most awesome equine in games – in the early noughties, this was as good as videogaming got



journey is so much more important than the destination.

In the absence of a supernatural satnav, the only way to guide Wander from gloomy point A to stabby point B is to point your sword skywards. Hold  and your blade sucks up the sun's glistening juju and provides a beam that points you in the general direction of the next Colossus. As tracking systems go, it's about as reliable as getting drunk, blindfolding yourself, then attempting to seek out your regular Friday-night kebab joint via the hope of catching a whiff of rotting donner.

But it's precisely because exploration is so hands-off that this is packed full of accidental moments of beauty. Stumbling upon a hidden beach or taking a dip in an elusive sinkhole are the sort of excursions that only occur through veering off the beaten track.

'CHUTE FOR THE STARS

It's testament to the game's beguiling world that forumites have written War And Peace-dwarfing diatribes over the years dedicated to glitching the game's unlockable parachute to uncover hidden areas of the map or to find the rumoured seventeenth Colossus. Give it up, guys: you've more chance of catching Nessie knocking back an Inn Bru chaser in the Loch Ness Arms.

Yes, those 16 bosses are of course wonderful. From a sky-surfing earwig to a brilliantly bearded troll, each sizeable scuffle subverts expectations through thoughtful placement of each beastie's weak spots. Yet it's the ride into that unknown that makes this PS2 gem such an unforgettable trip.

Shadow Of The Colossus



As taglines go, 'into the unknown, ride forth' isn't the most attention-grabbing. Even more so when you think of the alternatives Team Ico could have gone with for a game where you stand on the shoulders of giants... then repeatedly stab them to sad, stone-faced death. And yet those five little words perfectly capture the central charm of this enigmatic work of art.

Exploration in Shadow Of The Colossus is everything. You'd assume the core appeal of a game that's essentially 16 interspersed boss fights would be, y'know, the bosses. And you'd be wrong. Sure, its gargantuan scraps against melancholic leviathans that act as moving platforming levels as you clamber around their grassy backs are richly enduring, but it's the quiet, introspective navigation of a desolate forbidden land on horseback that truly cements Colossus' classic status.

Once known as Nico, the ethereal giant-killer originally contained much stronger links to its spiritual successor

Ico. Like the ghostly hand-hold-'em-up, Colossus originally starred horned boys who roamed the land hunting mighty beasts in packs. While the 'guilty slaying of strangely adorable monsters' survived as the central theme, it's the lack of the team aspect that makes the title such a mesmerising piece.

Controlling the near-mute Wander, it's your job to make a pact with a mysterious demon in order to bring your hero's missus back to life. To do this, you're tasked with murdering a series of the cuddliest goliaths this side of the BFG – no, not the weedy Doom blaster. Cue a lonely trek across miles of disquieting marshland, decaying forests and decimated shrines on gaming's best horse. Thanks to your fantastically animated steed Agro, there are few PlayStation outings where the

 **YOUR TASK IS TO MURDER THE CUDDLIEST SET OF GOLIATHS THIS SIDE OF THE BFG.** 



■ The HD remake gave us all kinds of sexy lighting.

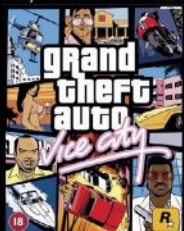
■ We defy you not to fall in love with your steed Agro.

■ Each fight – and enemy – is magnificently designed.

Lance (don't turn your back on him) Vance sure knows how to rock a Gordon Gekko cellular brick.



PlayStation 2



INFO

PUB ROCKSTAR
DEV ROCKSTAR NORTH
RELEASED 2002, PS2
GET IT NOW PSN,
 £7.99

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 Rockstar made Vice City in a little over a year.
- 2 The game boasts nearly twice the vehicles of GTA III.
- 3 It's one of the biggest-selling PS2 games ever.

Miami nice

A videogame that achieved the impossible when it made cruising along South Beach to the sound of Nik Kershaw feel cool. We kill the radio star and straighten up our shoulder pads for a visit to PlayStation 2's amoral '80s holiday resort



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

As Hall & Oates warmly warble on Flash FM, Tommy Vercetti really is Out Of Touch. Compare him to the cutting-edge trio of Michael, Trevor and Franklin from Rockstar North's latest Los Santos sandbox, and the Scarface-aspiring wiseguy is outdated like the mammoths in the La Brea Tar Pits. He can't slow down time while shooting (hell, he can't even move when firing), he can't stick to cover, and he sure as sucrose can't Google Earth himself into the sky so you can play as one of his hillbilly pals. But boy, does he have style.

GTA: Vice City thrives on a sense of flair unlike any other game. Rockstar's eye (and, more importantly, ear) for period-defining cultural flourishes elevates its '80s Miami-influenced open world to the status of modern masterpiece. Ruffling the hair of the decade it so affectionately mocks before pulling down its parachute pants, Vice City knows the era was equal parts awful and amazing. For every pedestrian strolling out of

Electric Boulevard sporting a lurid pastel suit with the sleeves rolled up, a quick blast of Frankie Goes To Hollywood on Wave 103 is only a D-pad tap away. Never before has a game so perfectly captured a sense of time and place with such a wry eye for detail.

Weirdly, the actual city is perhaps the least interesting Rockstar has ever built. Geographically, it borders on being a bore at times. Lacking the ever escalating hills of San Fierro, the bumpy, intimate boroughs of Liberty City or the long stretches of yawning tarmac seen in Las Venturas' strip, the tropical town often offers a flat, samey drive. And yet, that sense of style once again sweeps in to make the save like a legwarmers-wearing Superman.

Bomb across Starfish Island (with its recreation of Tony Montana's mansion)

LIOTTA'S SARKY, SARDONIC TURN INJECTS VERCETTI WITH MENACING HUMOUR.

on a motorbike, the wind ruffling Tommy's shirt, and Vice City surges to life. Take to bleached-denim-blue skies in the series' first flyable whirlybirds and the sweltering playground beneath starts to sing. Or perhaps you'd rather jog down Ocean Beach, indiscriminately swinging a chainsaw at rollerbladers as the sun rises over a nearby lighthouse. It's this unrelentingly cheery colour palette that makes Vice City a summer holiday you never want to end.

SEX & VERCETTI

Unlike GTA III's Claude, your felon here hasn't been hit with a dose of laryngitis. Conjuring memories of Henry Hill's pitch-perfect narration in Goodfellas, Rockstar pulled off a masterful signing when it cast Ray Liotta as Vercetti. The triple-A games of today may be flooded with more celebs than kicking-out time at The Viper Room, but back in 2002 hearing a respected Hollywood actor voice a character was a huge deal. And it's Liotta's sarky, sardonic turn that injects Vice City's lead man with real charisma and menacing humour.

It's a perfect storm of a game. Whip up gaming's most apt soundtrack (drown your lugs with some Blondie, Toto and Run DMC), add an era utterly ripe for Rockstar's scathing satire, then mix it with a glistening, sunburnt city, and you have an F5 to conquer all comers. Arguably, it's still the most evocative open world ever made. Yes, it lacks the scope of San Andreas and more imaginative missions of GTA IV, but Vice City is a total triumph of both style and substance. The '80s have never been more acceptable.



■ You can't beat a Don Johnson suit and a PCJ-600.



■ After grey old Liberty City, these sunsets spoil you.



■ The underused choppers handle with a real grace.

The Colossus Of Rhodes is one of the finest boss scraps you'll find on PS2 and makes for an ace intro to the game.



INFO

PUB SONY
DEV SONY SANTA MONICA
RELEASED 2007, PS2
GET IT NOW PSN, £13.99

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 The game has sold over a whopping 4.2 million copies.
- 2 Corey Burton also voiced Zeus in Disney's Hercules.
- 3 The HD remake sadly uses the original cutscenes.

Minotaur craft

Hell – or indeed heaven – hath no fury like a Spartan warrior with a chip on his broad shoulders and a penchant for gruesome button-hammering kills. Here, everyone's favourite constantly-irate immortal looks to reverse his fate in a monumentally murderous sequel



God Of War II

How do you make a deity vulnerable? After all, when you're a strapping slab of irritable Ancient Greek muscle who can zap himself into a skyscraper-sized slaphead, you're not going to sweat a narked-off Harpy. After Kratos conquered Ares and claimed his godly seat on Mount Olympus in the original, Sony Santa Monica had set itself quite the challenge in creating a worthy follow-up to PS2's most iconic actioner.

Sensibly, God Of War II immediately nerfs your antihero's Olympian powers, reducing him to a mere... uh, near-unstoppable killing machine. Ah well, at least your freshly man-sized, surly Spartan has to contend with a sentient statue that makes the giant metal dude in Jason And The Argonauts look like a garden gnome. And that's what really defines this sequel: scale.

As the Colossus Of Rhodes politely reveals before stomping you into a squidgy paste, it's definitely about the size of the Cerberus in this fight. Bigger in almost every conceivable way, GOWII is a veritable kill list scrawled with the names of Greek mythology's A-listers. It's this irresistible combination of sprawling grandeur and X-rated monster murder that makes old

homicidal britches' pursuit of the Sisters Of Fate such a success.

Now, while Kratos' first tale was a lean and muscular action game carved out of sturdy combat and set-piece spectacle, it was also a bit of a tease. After opening with one of best sustained scraps on PlayStation, GOW's mighty Hydra scuffle is followed up by just two other boss fights in the entire game. Compare that to the sequel's dozen offerings and the increased scale of Ghost Of Sparta 2.0 is as striking as a tiara-sporting Cyclops entering the Miss Teen USA Bikini Finals.

And oh, what bosses they are. Eviscerating Perseus (cutely played by Clash Of The Titans' Harry Hamlin), yanking off the serpent-encrusted noggin of a big-boned Gorgon that looks like a cross between Kaa and Lisa Riley, or impaling the monstrous Kraken on what's essentially a giant fish tackle; God Of War II's headline battles are a masterclass in spectacle and controlled fury. Oh, and did we mention the baddy

IMPAALE THE MONSTROUS KRAKEN ON WHAT'S ESSENTIALLY A GIANT FISH TACKLE.

with a thousand boobs? Yeah, perhaps we'll save that story until the young 'uns have trotted off to bed.

What we will tell you about is the game's impeccable pacing. Although this is an experience still based on decapitating hundreds of identical beasts, Sony Santa Monica keeps your journey constantly breezing, thanks to varied set-pieces and a revolving carousel of evocative locations.

Whether it's clambering across the Steeds Of Time (imagine four Mount Rushmore-sized ponies) or tumbling down a near-bottomless cavern as you tussle with Icarus over his wings, God Of War II constantly cycles through grisly sights to keep you enthralled. Hell, there's even a Pegasus flying bit where you gut an armada of Griffins.

GET SPARTA

Released in the UK just over a month after PS3, Kratos showed PS2 was still capable of technical feats that could wow in the era of the Cell chip. Indeed, in terms of sheer spectacle, Sony's new baby arguably had nothing to match God Of War II until the Titan-taming third adventure. It also proved the series could blossom without the vision of David Jaffe, as the first game's lead animator Cory Barlog effortlessly slid into the sweary creator's loafers to steer the sequel to critical acclaim.

It's a dirty great barrelling boulder of a game. Relishing in over-the-top pantomime violence, God Of War II reimagines the works of Homer and Hesiod as an R-rated Ray Harryhausen picture where gory polygons, not plasticine, prove God is a Greek.



■ Show Zeus' other son who's the stabby boss.



■ The Pegasus flights are surprisingly graceful.



■ It wouldn't be GOW without a scrap against a Titan.

JC Denton, Jack of all trades and master of... pretty much all of them, actually, once you give him the right upgrades.



INFO

PUB EIDOS
DEV ION STORM
RELEASED 2002, PS2
GET IT NOW PSN, £7.99

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 The game set a new benchmark for player choice.
- 2 Level design rarely reaches these heights even today.
- 3 It's possible to beat it without drawing a gun.

Good God

Paying homage to PlayStation 2's seminal, thinking man's shooter – and the most unnecessary pair of sunglasses in all of gaming. If Human Revolution was your introduction to this series, you're duty bound to track down the original



Deus Ex

Here we go, then. The games writers' game. The mythical masterwork that anyone old enough to remember when trenchcoats and shades were a legitimate style choice *just can't let go*. Deus Ex changed more than just a genre, because it can't be pinned down to just one. More accurately, it changed both the gamer and game designer's perception of what's possible in the medium. We're already deep into smoking jacket, brandy-sipping, beard-caressing territory here, but just go with it and we promise we won't start quoting Nietzsche.

To really understand why a game about a man with metal veins caused such a flood of praise back in 2002, we need to examine the climate at the time. Remember – this was only seven years beyond Doom on PS1. PS2 gamers were subsisting on a steady diet of PC ports, with 20 Red Factions for every Half-Life. We didn't have icons such as Colonel Radec or even Captain Price yet.

The kingpin of game design thus far was Id's John Carmack, who – crucially – had a programming background, and a programmer's mindset. He typified a culture that valued the engine above the gameplay possibilities, striving for

technical perfection above artistry. The contract between the gamer and the game at that point was as follows: make me look cool in set-pieces, give me big guns and don't make the key cards too hard to find, and I won't go running down the wrong corridor, trying to break the fourth wall.

Here's where former Id employee and Ion Storm founder John Romero comes in. He built the Texas studio with the exact opposite credo: rather than sweat over a proprietary engine, use third-party Unreal tech. Rather than funnel you through the fairground, let you run free. That's exactly what its third title, Deus Ex, did – better and with more possibility than any game before it and most that followed.

You want choice? You can't handle choice. Every objective in Deus Ex could be tackled in so many ways that the monkey typing out Shakespeare would have his feet up before you even got to the heavy weapons. And we're not talking binary, 'use this obviously

placed vent or storm in the front door' choices. Snipe the NSA terrorists from a different postcode, if you fancy it. Use your hacking skills to bypass all the security cameras and turn the turrets against your foes. Sneak from goon to goon, one tranq dart lighter each time. Fire a LAW missile into the wall of explosive barrels you've painstakingly assembled from across the level. All together now in your best William Wallace voice: *freedom*.

FUN FOR ALL

Every piece of every level was constructed that way, allowing Duke Nukem and Solid Snake to blitz through it in their own way and soak in equal amounts of satisfaction. If you're looking for Deus Ex's most evident legacy, consider Dishonored and Bioshock Infinite's malleable design. Look at the success of 2011's Human Revolution, which *almost* replicated the original game's scope and vision.

That's what people remember more than anything: the immaculate game design. It's almost a footnote that the story, characters and setting were just as good. So good that it perfectly encapsulated millennial culture: fear of technology growing out of control, increasing mistrust of corporations, a poke at the widening wealth gap. The overheard conversations, emails, books and cutscenes referenced movie culture, mythology, sci-fi and philosophy, giving it both intellectual clout at the time and a pang of nostalgia in 2013. Today, Deus Ex is anything but dead – ah, now we've gone and broken our promise...

DUKE NUKEM AND SOLID SNAKE COULD PLAY IT THEIR WAY AND EACH BE SATISFIED.



■ Not pictured: the stealthy, considered approach.



■ The epitome of millennial chic, lest we forget.



■ An RPG wearing traditional shooter's clothing.



The world only needs one Snake and one Boss, which is why our vision-impaired hero is forced to battle his mentor.

INFO

PUB KONAMI
DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS
RELEASED 2004, PS2
GET IT NOW PSN, £11.99

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 It's a prequel that acts as Big Boss' debut mission.
- 2 2006's expanded Subsistence adds camera controls.
- 3 The game is included in the MGS HD Collection.

Like a boss

Every entry in Hideo Kojima's legendary stealth series is fit to be described as a bona fide classic, but this one surely goes down as Snake's finest hour: the adventure that made you nosh on pythons, outshoot OAPs and survive an unforgettable jungle



Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

The serpent and the rung climbing apparatus: there's never been a more indelible game-related pairing. Still, ignore dice, boards or coffee tables. The ultimate face-off between these longstanding enemies is Metal Gear Solid 3 forcing its slithering agent to scale roughly 473 rungs in a haunting five-minute ascent that's arguably PS2's best moment, full stop.

As theatrical as it is memorable, Big Boss' ladder climb crystallises what makes this Cold War-era jungle jaunt such an enduring classic. In a series defined by moments of subversive invention, Snake Eater eases past all of Hideo Kojima's other adventures. Forget MGS1 and the ingenious Psycho Mantis pad switcheroo. Somehow, the visionary Japanese developer makes a bit where all you do is press up on the left stick for 300 seconds more engaging than besting a flying, telekinetic S&M fan.

Context is everything, of course. The reason why scaling a giant ladder is so intoxicating is because of what's gone immediately before. In this case,

a mentally exhausting and emotionally draining sniper duel against a guy who looks like Uncle Albert from Only Fools & Horses. Often – correctly – labelled as the best boss fight in gaming, Snake's patient skirmish against The End subverts every lead-spewing instinct. When you've spent 40 unbearably tense minutes crouched in a log listening to a pensioner's breath, the chance to quietly reflect is beyond cathartic.

Metal Gear has always marched to the beat of its own motormouthed, occasionally unintelligible drummer. As such, Snake Eater's opening hour is wistfully obtuse in a style you'd never get away with now. Its controls are unapologetically fiddly – aiming with **R1** and shooting with **△**. 'I' indeed. The claustrophobic corridors that defined its predecessors are ditched for

■ ■ ■ EVEN IN A SERIES DEFINED BY SUBVERSIVE INVENTION, THIS EASES PAST ALL THE REST. ■ ■ ■

sprawling hide-and-sneak playgrounds forged from Russian forests. Oh, and a chipper Major from Exeter pips in at every opportunity to talk about The Great Escape. We're busy here, Zero.

Ignore all of that background noise, though. It simply doesn't register once you've invested a couple of hours into the most consistently imaginative, daft and loveably esoteric title on PS2. Unlike MGS4, Snake Eater isn't hampered by having to knot together plot strands from past games. This is very much a self-contained story of how Big Boss went from manipulated hero to tyrannical ruler. The least complicated and most cohesive Metal Gear, it has an unbroken flow that culminates in a poignant twist to rival Bioshock Infinite.

JUNGLE JOURNEY

Snake Eater's structure is its strongest quality (boss battles aside, of course). Where MGS4's ambitious plot had you jumping about the globe, PS2's Solid swansong benefits from a single, tremendously thought-out location. Starting in sweltering swamps, it charts a journey through mountain paths and military bases, maintaining a brilliant sense of its own geography.

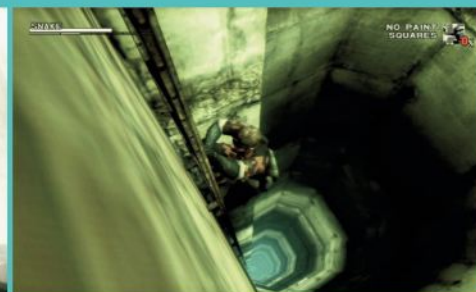
Sexy, stupid, preachy: MGS3 is a contradictory, conflicted masterpiece. With one hand it encourages you to spy at a woman in her pants, while the other forces you to ruminate on the manipulative propaganda of war. Snake Eater is situated *all* the country miles away from the annually pumped out, microtransaction-peddling fare that often clogs the current market. They really don't make 'em like this anymore.



■ The bike chase with the Shagohod is amazing.



■ You won't forget Big Boss' tearful cemetery finale.



■ A five-minute climb: the ultimate calf workout.

THE GREATEST HITS FROM WHERE IT ALL STARTED

PS1 HALL OF FAME



1



FINAL FANTASY VII

Often credited as the game that brought RPGs to the masses, you only need look at how frequently fans call for a remake to understand the regard in which it's held. The graphics may have aged in the 16 years since its startling arrival on the scene, but the grand, sweeping story – as emotionally involving as almost anything before or since – remains as gripping as ever, and the combat and upgrade mechanics are rock-solid. Try it for yourself on the PlayStation Store now.

2



METAL GEAR SOLID

No game is perfect, but Hideo Kojima's PS1 debut is closer than most. This is where Tactical Espionage Action was truly born, with Snake's snowy sneaking antics still eminently replayable even 15 years after the game's original release.

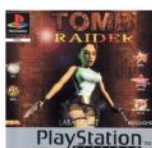
3



RESIDENT EVIL 2

It may not have the creepy mansion or dog jumping through the window, but this is PS1's survival horror peak. The mechanics were refined and it was a visual treat, with vast numbers of zombs on-screen at once.

4



TOMB RAIDER

The Derby-developed gem that introduced Lara Croft to the world. Angular as it may be, the platforming systems had an enjoyable purity to them, and some of the locations and vast caverns were hugely impressive.

5



SILENT HILL

Harry Mason's search for his daughter would be upstaged by its imaginative sequel, but it birthed a new type of scare-intensive experience. Its psychological tricks still resonate, even if the graphics horrify for different reasons.

6



GRAN TURISMO 2

Any criticism of recent GT games stems purely from just how early on Polyphony nailed its Real Driving Simulator. Refining the already class-leading handling model from the first game, the follow-up also featured nearly 650 different cars.

7



TEKKEN 3

It may sound odd given the way the beat-'em-up landscape looks now, but this was the top dog on PS1. With fluid animations and a wonderfully balanced combat system, it remains one of the most critically revered fighters of all time.

8



FINAL FANTASY IX

Two entries in the top ten for role-playing's granddaddy shows just how consistently Square was nailing it around the turn of the millennium. This has a charming medieval setting, and a fine cast of characters that you bond with instantly.

9



WIPEOUT 2097

The futuristic hover-racing series truly crossed over into the mainstream, introducing gamers to electronica and techno – and vice versa. The racing was faster and more intense here than in the original, with an increased focus on weaponry.

10



DRIVER

Two years before Rockstar transformed open-world gaming with GTA III, Reflections attempted similar with inferior hardware. With four cities to explore and cinematic car chases, this was a hugely impressive achievement.

11



LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

One that often tops lists of most wanted remakes, the game's ability to be proficient in so many disciplines made it remarkable. Excellent platforming combined with great combat, teasing puzzles, and a story you actually cared about.

12



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Gamers of a certain age will never forget the halcyon days of virtual skating's finest franchise. Brilliantly designed levels dovetailed with more appealing objectives, and a soundtrack that is still remembered oh-so-fondly.

13



CRASH BANDICOOT

Much like Rayman, you might not like the lead himself, but you can't help but respect his games. A bright, breezy and fast-paced forerunner to all kinds of iconic franchises, this was also where Naughty Dog debuted on Sony machines.

14



CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

In an increasingly 3D world, Symphony stuck to its side-scrolling roots and was rewarded with huge, and justified, critical acclaim, skilfully fusing RPG elements with platforming and exquisite combat.

15



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO '98

Every PES you loved has its genus here. Eccentric presentation couldn't harm an excellent on-pitch performance – plus you could flick the ball up and do bicycle kicks from anywhere.

GREATEST CONSOLE EVER? WITH GAMES LIKE THESE, MAYBE PS2 HALL OF FAME



1



SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

Team Ico's second creation stands alone in terms of its bold, artistic brilliance, and it offers something that is resolutely and fantastically unique. The world inhabited by our forlorn warrior fighting for lost love is simultaneously beautiful and desolate and the game's structure – 16 boss fights against building-sized behemoths – belies the adventure's tenderness and affecting emotional core. The PS2 era saw the release of many games which can be considered classics – and this is the best of them all.

2



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

The pinnacle of one of the finest and most consistently creative franchises in videogame history? You'd be bold to suggest otherwise, with a back-to-basics approach and some utterly unforgettable boss fights making this the connoisseur's choice for stealth.

9



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

Seeing this on PS2 had most claiming witchcraft, with good reason. Hugely detailed environments were one thing, but Kojima pulling the wool over everyone's eyes with his choice of lead was a brilliant ruse.

3



RESIDENT EVIL 4

Few games can truly claim to have changed the whole medium, but this is one. In the wake of its over-the-shoulder aiming system, third-person shooting was never the same again – and that's before you factor in the wonderful enemies and standout set-pieces.

10



SILENT HILL 2

Perhaps the finest example of psychological horror seen in videogames. Puzzling was pushed to the fore over combat, but it's the ambiguousness of the main character's search for his dead wife – and the remarkable ending revelations – that resonate most.

4



GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

Anyone marvelling at what instalment V has recently delivered needs to be mindful that this was every bit the same remarkable achievement. Massive in terms of scale and ambition, there was also an expertly told personal story at the game's heart.

11



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

No one forgets when they first straddled that motorbike and Billie Jean started blasting from the speakers. Vice City captured a time and a place as well as any other game in this masterful series, and its tale of neon-lit excess is justifiably fondly remembered.

5



GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

The greatest driving game around at the time, and possibly the greatest driving game ever made for its time. It looked absolutely glorious, and the progression system – both in terms of upgrading cars and license tests – provided remarkable longevity.

12



OKAMI

So you play a wolf god with a paintbrush for a tail who draws on stuff to fight bad guys and solve puzzles. Oh, and she's called Amaterasu. Who's in? Thankfully this beautiful, cel-shaded oddity was every bit as excellent as it was unconventional.

6



FINAL FANTASY XII

One of PS2's last great hurrahs, and what a way to help the machine sign off. Gone were the turn-based days of old, replaced with a more fluid but equally in-depth real-time battle system, and this was married to a gloriously designed and sprawling world laden with strife.

13



TIMESPLITTERS 2

The last great shared-screen multiplayer shooter? Perhaps, and while the internet can be blamed for us all becoming gaming hermits, Timesplitter's brilliant mix of fast-paced action and inventive level-design was always worth travelling for.

7



GOD OF WAR II

Another of the console's last push, few – if any – games ever showcased the machine's technical prowess quite as well. While the narrative might not have stood up to the original, the scale of the game and its suite of remarkable boss battles more than made up for it.

14



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6

It was this or the Colina-fronted number three, but realistically the later release is superior. A near-perfect football sim (and that's what it was, make no mistake), this was the last time FIFA was inarguably – and comprehensively – beaten into second place.

8



ICO

Getting a game about holding hands with a ghostly princess green-lit would be hard enough, but even more so when it's your debut. Thankfully Sony saw sense, and what resulted was a tender and unforgettable puzzling experience.

15



SSX 3

What defines this brilliant snowboarder isn't so much high-octane racing or physics-defying tricks – though those are present and correct – but the joy of exploration, with off-piste runs providing a relaxing, back-to-nature escape from gaming's hurly-burly.

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LAST-GEN'S GREATEST GAMES

PS3 HALL OF FAME



1



GRAND THEFT AUTO V

No game could possibly live up to the pre-release hype that surrounded Rockstar's latest open-world effort, and yet somehow expectations were surpassed by the phenomenal final product. The largest entry in the series is also one of the most ambitious games ever, but its fusion of thrilling missions, entertaining characters and scathing satire looks effortless. There can be no better way to bring a generation to a close. And yes, we too are crossing everything – even *that* – for a PS4 release.

2



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

The game that sparked a million mancruises, with a perfectly pitched script, crunchy combat and set-pieces like no other. In three words: unprecedented. Unequalled. Uncharted.

3



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

A near-perfect open-world fusion of engaging storytelling, truly compelling characters and a living environment ripe for experimentation. No sandbox since has got us quite so invested, and the bold ending still resonates to this day.

4



THE LAST OF US

PS3's premier developer proves a misbehaving pooch can learn new tricks in this extraordinary apocalyptic adventure. Blending intense horror, ferocious shooting and a wonderful script, this is one of the most emotive games in history.

5



BIOSHOCK INFINITE

Perhaps the best narrative of the entire generation brings one of its finest series to a staggering climax. The original game would be well deserving of a place, but the mind-boggling revelations here run a whole lot deeper.

6



MASS EFFECT 2

While Bioware's trilogy-ender sends Shepard out in fine style, it's the middle slice of the delicious sci-fi sandwich that remains its best. A brilliantly scripted action-RPG, the closing 'suicide mission' provides an incredible finale.

7



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

The most gleefully playful and imaginative stealth game ever. Whether you're watching a monkey slurp soda or revisiting the site of the PS1 original, no game honours its past so poignantly.

8



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

Simply the finest COD ever made. From *that* nuke to Captain Price's mesmerising ghillie suit stealth mission, few games can match Modern Warfare's thrilling scripted spectacle.

9



BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

The most compelling bit of Bats action money can buy... that doesn't involve Heath Ledger's Joker. Thanks to an acutely detailed open-world chunk of Gotham, Rocksteady's classic is simply the best superhero game ever made.

10



ICO/SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS HD

The only double bill that lets you hold a princess' hand before stabbing up a labradoodle-cute monster the size of a shopping centre. Both games share the capacity to make you cry like nothing else on PS3.

11



PORTAL 2

Only Valve could turn advanced physics, impossible puzzles and a voice cast comprised of a disembodied AI and Stephen Merchant into such a unique and undeniable work of genius. Hands down the funniest first-person experience on console.

12



THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

Had it worked from the off? Top ten, no doubt. It's testament to this impeccably detailed dragon-blasting RPG that even after the issues, Skyrim is still one of PS3's biggest and best open worlds.

13



HEAVY RAIN

From controversial purveyor of interactive cinema David Cage comes this psychological thriller that plays like no other game on the system. So many games promise real consequences to your actions, but none deliver like this masterpiece.

14



CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW

Best-in-class adventure-brawler that manages to refine every mechanic of the genre, all while layering on inventive puzzles and an epic narrative. Plus the ending is jaw-drop fodder, make no mistake.

15



DARK SOULS

Action-RPG that's akin to nothing else you've ever played. It may be impenetrable like an Amish girl's undercrackers, but persevere and there's a brutal and beautiful challenge within that you will never, ever forget.

HANDS UP FOR THESE PORTABLE GEMS

PSP HALL OF FAME



1



METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER

Bite-sized missions did nothing to dim the brilliance of a bespoke handheld Metal Gear, and with its base-building and army-recruiting mechanics this felt every bit as grand as its console counterparts. Series creator Hideo Kojima's direct involvement served to elevate Peace Walker above all previous PSP offerings (not to mention every single one that followed), and its idiosyncrasies only added to the overall appeal. Plus attaching an enemy to a rapidly ascending balloon is always funny.

2



GRAND THEFT AUTO: CHINATOWN WARS

Returning to a top-down view akin to the series' first games proved an inspired move for a portable GTA, and the change in structure – mini-games and a drug-dealing mechanic – bolstered an interesting triad-centric plot.

3



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS: WAR OF THE LIONS

Building its predecessor's brilliance, key additions made this the finest roleplayer on a system replete with them. Additional classes, cutscenes and wireless multiplayer added to a flawless storyline and typically sprawling plot.

4



GOD OF WAR: GHOST OF SPARTA

Chains Of Olympus was great, but the handheld god-bashing formula was refined with this sequel. It's a family affair for Kratos, but as well as the improved plot the combat was far more robust, and new mechanics were introduced that later appeared in Ascension.

5



TACTICS OGRE: LET US CLING TOGETHER

Wonderful subtitle and game. Originally released in 1995, 16 years passed before the enhanced version made such a splash on PSP. With its classic isometric grid design, this is as mechanically perfect as any game in the genre.

6



LUMINES II

Forget one, it's never even just ten more goes. Loo-2 may look like Tetris – and it'll suck your life away to the same extent – but the sound and light play on offer here makes it a much more groovy proposition. We still say groovy, right?

7



FINAL FANTASY IV: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

The original game, *plus* episodic add-on The After Years, *plus* a new scenario Interlude which links the two. A fine package, but it's really the core offering that's the star: a standout story with unforgettable characters.

8



VALKYRIA CHRONICLES II

Told you RPGs were PSP's strong suit. Some were perplexed at a handheld-only sequel to the original, but they needn't have been annoyed: action-orientated but with a tactical brain, this turned out to be a more-than-worthy follow-up.

9



LITTLEBIGPLANET

Sackboy's gone on to global stardom, but it can't be forgotten just how big an achievement it was to fit the little man and his Hessian ways on to Sony's original handheld. All present, correct, and super cute, this was everything it needed to be.

10



GRAN TURISMO

The lack of car upgrading and a full career mode was definitely a black mark against the series' good name, and yet the realistic handling and impressive vehicle numbers made this the system's definitive racer. Plus it looked smooth like an ice sculpture of Shaft.

11



GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

One of the earliest indications of what the machine was truly capable of. Liberty City is yours to explore in a prequel to GTA III – and with motorbikes this time – complete with more indoor environments and multiplayer.

12



DISSIDIA: FINAL FANTASY

There sure is a lot of FF love in these pages, but it's well deserved. Actually a fighting game with RPG elements, this was a wonderfully fast and fluid genre fusion, with simple-to-grasp controls producing wonderfully cinematic battles.

13



PATAPON 3

Who would ever have thought that a tribe of rhythmic eyeballs would become a format staple? Charming, bizarre and addictive, you must strike drums in time so that your adorable troops can defeat AI factions and – a first here – other players.

14



LOCOROCO 2

We're definitely into creative territory now. Using the shoulder buttons you tilt the entire world in this colourful platformer, guiding smiling blobs – which can be split apart on your command – as they attempt to repel a planetary invasion.

15



WIPEOUT PULSE

Like Wipeout, only smaller. This handheld offering had all the fast-paced space racing and techno beats you'd want, but it also packed in reversible course configurations and loop-the-loop-enabling mag strips, as well as an all-new progression system.

YOUR EVERY NEED FOR ON-THE-GO GOODNESS

PS VITA HALL OF FAME



1



PERSONA 4: GOLDEN

If ever a game could make you forget the existence of anything outside the Vita's screen, it's this thoughtful and unique JRPG epic – the most recent handheld entry in the revered Shin Megami Tensei series. Essentially it gives you another stab at high school – this time with intrigue, mystery and superpowers instead of acne, nerves and an unpredictable vocal register.

2



VIRTUE'S LAST REWARD

This visual novel/puzzler just gets better and better over its 40 hours. The dialogue's engaging, and however tough it gets (which is to say, very) you're never left rage-scouring for clues.

3



GRAVITY RUSH

Use a gravity-defying cat to break the laws of physics and zoom across the skies of a floating steampunk city. With stylish comic-book looks and a sassy heroine, this is a rush to remember.

4



LITTLEBIGPLANET

Sackboy's back, smaller but just as loveable as ever. His platforming antics work perfectly on Vita, and the new control inputs complement the level creator brilliantly. Also: d'awwww.

5



LUMINES: ELECTRONIC SYMPHONY

Part block puzzler, part mobile disco, this is as certain to have you nodding along to ace choonage as it is to keep you returning for more reflex-testing action.

6



METAL GEAR SOLID HD COLLECTION

Two of PlayStation's finest adventures scale down beautifully, with enough cutscenes to fill a transatlantic flight. Even less excuse not to play, then.

7



UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS

Drake proves he's just as adept at adventuring on the go. A prequel story that's classic jungle action, and crammed full of typical Uncharted charm.

8



RAYMAN ORIGINS

He of no limbs finds the perfect home on Vita's OLED screen. Beautiful visuals and flawless platforming make Rayman a handheld delight of quirky cartoon ridiculousness.

9



FIFA FOOTBALL

The sequel's a shameful rip-off that only updates kits and rosters, so unless you find them both for the same price, this entry is still the best way to get a footy-on-the-move fix.

10



TALES FROM SPACE: MUTANT BLOBS ATTACK

Simple but gloriously addictive. Make your ball of goo grow to vast proportions in this B-movie romp, taking in all the pop-culture zingers in the background.

11



SUPER STARDUST DELTA

HR policy frowns on heroin, but we can't imagine this is any less moreish. An ace port of the PlayStation Network shooter, you'll never stop scratching the high-score itch.

12



BLAZBLUE: CONTINUUM SHIFT EXTEND

There's almost *too much* content here – the wealth of game modes is a total nerdgasm for fans, and the characters are insanely diverse.

13



URBAN TRIAL FREESTYLE

Taking more than a little inspiration from its Xbox counterpart, this tricks and tracks biker is absurdly addictive. Be warned: the 'Restart' option will take quite the hammering.

14



UNIT 13

Free of any half-arsed story or COD-posturing, this shooter embraces Vita's features without being gimmicky. Its solid mechanics make the generic warfare more than forgivable.

15



ULTIMATE MARVEL VS CAPCOM 3

Imagine the full-fat version, only smaller. Now add some optional nonsense touch controls, all the DLC characters and a near-PS3 level of prettiness.

A MUST-OWN SELECTION OF DOWNLOADABLE CLASSICS

PSN HALL OF FAME



1



JOURNEY

An object lesson in the notion that less is more, this two-hour voyage crafts an incredible, immersive narrative and a genuine emotional connection using little more than near-silent figures, marvellous sand physics and floating pieces of cloth. A remarkable and unique experience, as well as a new high for both Thatgamecompany (who also made the excellent Flow and Flower) and PSN gaming as a whole.

2



THE WALKING DEAD

With this episodic zombie series now drawn to a close, it stands among the best downloadable games ever, with emotional ties and tangible consequences for your actions.

3



BRAID

If you want to make the argument that games are art, this is the place to start. An achingly beautiful hand-drawn style combines with brilliant but brutal time-bending puzzles.

4



MLB 13: THE SHOW

The long wait is over: the best sports series around has landed in the UK with ace presentation, deep but approachable gameplay, and a life-sapping Franchise mode. Worth learning a new sport for.

5



RESIDENT EVIL 4 HD

One of the best games on PS2 gets a hi-def makeover. Still the pinnacle of survival horror, you'll get scared, shooty and decapitated by a chainsaw. And that's a triple win, quite frankly.

6



HOTLINE MIAMI

Part puzzler, part top-down murder-'em-up that's as brutal as almost anything else on PlayStation. It's hard but never frustrating, with instant restarts and lightning-fast gameplay.

7



STACKING

Tim Schafer puzzler-cum-adventure-cum-headtrip in which you solve mysteries by stacking Russian dolls with unique abilities. Intelligent, insane and totally immature.

8



FLOWER

More 'experience' than game, this collect-'em-up sees you steering a petal on the breeze by tilting your Sixaxis. It's a soothing mix of colour and music; a lovely deviation from frantic action.

9



BROTHERS: A TALE OF TWO SONS

Engrossing, varied and touching, this Nordic puzzler offers a unique variety of single-player co-op as you take control of one sibling on each analogue stick.

10



LARA CROFT AND THE GUARDIAN OF LIGHT

Ignore the looks and know that this is one of Lara's finest outings ever. Great two-player action plus loads of treasure hunting. A co-op essential.

11



PIXELJUNK SHOOTER

It was expanded on by the sequel, but the inventiveness and satisfyingly simple twin-stick gameplay mechanics of the original mean that this is still the best PixelJunk title around.

12



PAC-MAN CHAMPIONSHIP ED DX

How do you update an all-time classic? Why, up the pace, throw in loads of neon and add some of the most satisfying sound effects ever. Sold!

13



LIMBO

This understated, monochromatic tale of a lone boy's escape from a danger-filled forest is as gorgeous as it is frustrating. A glorious combination of eye-caressing art and gut-punching gore.

14



OKAMI HD

Beautiful like Nathan Drake standing in front of a Hawaiian sunset, this tale of a wolf goddess and her celestial paintbrush is still unique six years after its original PlayStation 2 release.

15



THOMAS WAS ALONE

Platform-puzzler that manages to imbue a bunch of quadrilaterals with personality thanks to a witty script and clever gameplay mechanics. A shining example of making a lot out of a little.

WATCH DOGS

ETA 2014 / PUB UBISOFT / DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL



Perhaps the most wanted game on PS4, this cutting-edge sandbox brings sexy hack with an entire city you can digitally manipulate using a hugely powerful smartphone. Slinking into the obsessive loafers of vigilante Aiden Pearce, you must bend Chicago's electronics to work in your favour in this ambitious open-world that rocks clever second-screen support.

BIG SHOT

Use your phone to
cripple trains or read
rude emails. (Maybe.)



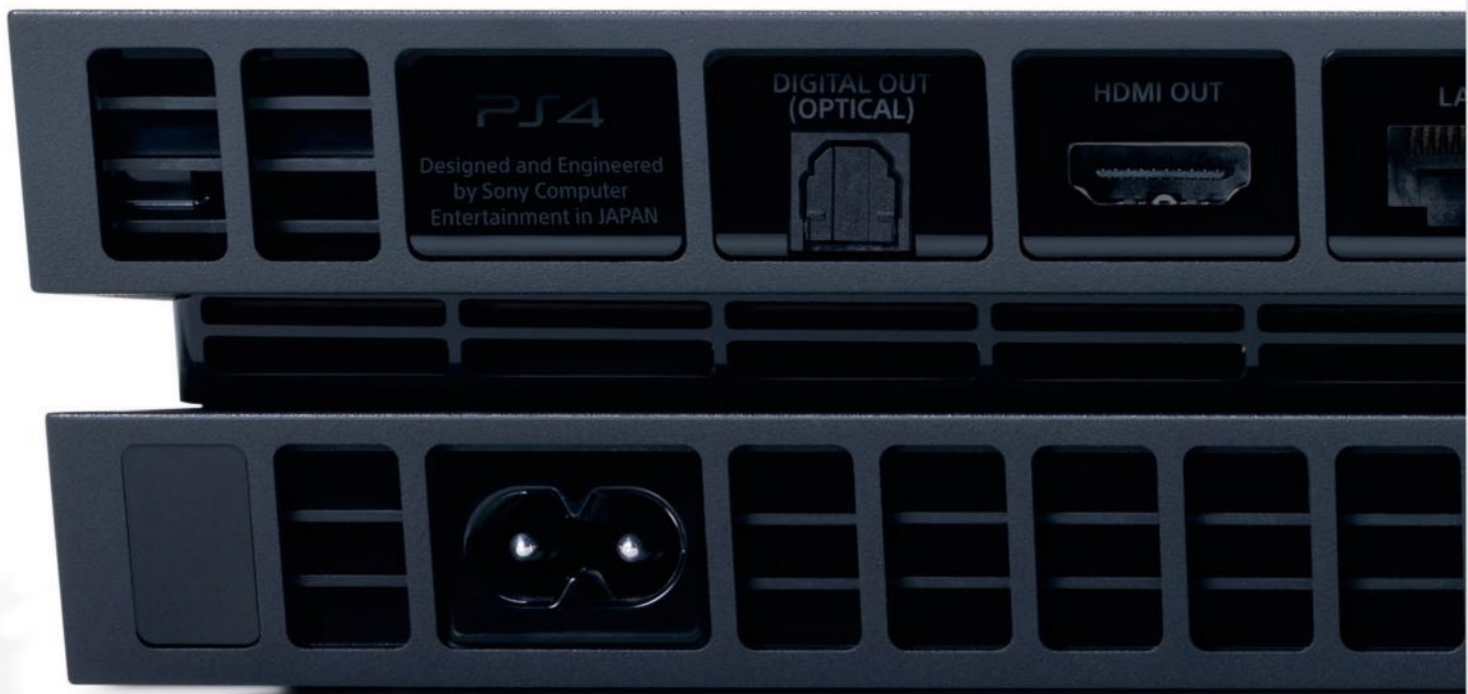
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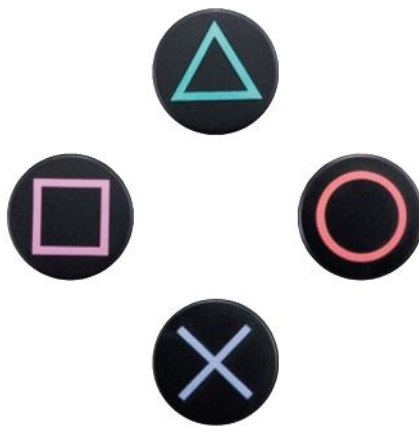
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